



THE *JAZZ* ARCHIVIST

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Volume XXVII, 2014



Contributors: Jerry Brock, Kathryn Hobgood Ray,
and Dan Vernhettes and Peter Hanley

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Cover photograph: Alcide "Slow Drag" Pavageau, 1958, photographed by Walter Eysselinck, an early "jazz pilgrim" from Belgium, whose collection was recently acquired by Hogan Jazz Archive. For more on Walter Eysselinck, including additional selections from his compelling folio of late 1950s jazz photography, see the "Curator's Commentary" column in this issue.

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In Memory: Uncle Lionel Batiste

February 11, 1932 – July 8, 2012

“Colorful In Life - Rich In Spirit”

Dedicated to the Batiste Family
by Jerry Brock



Uncle Lionel Batiste (photo by Michael P. Smith, from the author's personal collection).

Lionel Batiste was the co-leader, a featured singer, and the bass drum player with the Treme Brass Band from its inception until he passed away in July 2012. He was an avid second liner, participant in the black parade culture of New Orleans, and a good friend. When he died I was moved to write a memorial piece for his family. This article expands that work.

Perhaps the smartest thing Benny Jones did when he started the Treme Brass Band was to bring his uncle, by marriage, Lionel Batiste into the group. For Uncle Lionel, music was as natural as breathing air. When he entertained there was no pretense or burden of expectations, no lack of confidence or hint of arrogance. He was beyond good or bad taste. It was always about how we are in this thing called life together: “Would you care to dance?”

The marvel is that Uncle Lionel was born economically underprivileged during the Great Depression at the height of Prohibition (possibly the reason for his preference for home brew) in an era of intense segregation enforced by the notorious “White League” administration of Mayor T. Semmes Walmsley.¹ With the support of his immediate and extended family and friends he bent a life burdened with inequality into a triumphant and uplifting personal expression of

humanity, celebration, and kindness. That is the beauty of the New Orleans music culture that Uncle Lionel grew up in and embraced. As Louis Armstrong once said, "What we play is life and the natural thing."²

Music was a natural thing for the Batiste family from the cradle to the grave. They were not professional musicians; for decades only Lionel's family and the community that he lived in knew of his musical talent and modest allure. This was a family for whom community-based music, second line parade culture, and the Spiritual Church provided healing forces. In the face of racist oppression, these powerful outlets for creative expression nurtured a sense of freedom, positive self-identity, and benevolence, individually and collectively, albeit beyond mainstream social norms.

* * * *

On January 28, 1909, Walter Lewis Batiste married Alma Trepagnier.³ Walter was born c. 1890 and Alma c. 1892.⁴ Their union birthed eleven children: Walter, Alma, Elvidge, Ferdinand, Henry, Rodney, Arthur, Norman, Lionel, Miriam, and Felecia. Fittingly, the name Walter from German means "leader of the army" and Alma from Spanish means "the soul."

Walter Batiste's ancestors are a bit of a mystery. Walter first appears in the historical record in Algiers living by the levee on Patterson Street at the age of seven with his older brother Arthur and their Uncle John and Aunt Mary.⁵ John Batiste declared that he was a "Preacher of Gospel" and that his father (Lionel's paternal great grandfather) was born in Africa and his mother in Maryland. As a young man Walter worked as a stable man and blacksmith and later as a porter at various establishments.⁶

Alma was the daughter of Ursin (born c. 1871-75) and Marie Francois Trepagnier (born c. 1870-1875). Her siblings were Arthur and Marselette (later called Mercedes) and Gustave Mansion.⁷ The Trepagnier family is one of the historical families of New Orleans and Louisiana. Claude Trepagnier, a French Canadian, traveled to the Louisiana Colony in 1699. He fathered seven children and founded a large, varied, and multi-ethnic clan of Trepagniers in Louisiana.⁸

Jean Francois Trepagnier II (b. 1747) established Trepagnier Plantation in St. Charles Parish and was one of two plantation owners killed in the Slave Revolt of 1811.⁹ Ironically, there is a chance that Lionel had ancestors on both sides of that battle, as he did in the Civil War. Norbert Trepagnier (b. 1824, d. 1891), slave owner, business and landowner near Tunisburg (below Algiers), was a decorated Civil War Captain in the Confederacy, severely wounded in the failed defense of Baton Rouge. Before and after the war he was involved in politics and became Recorder of First District Court.¹⁰ He marched along with John Treme and other dignitaries in a New Orleans reception parade for ex-President James Polk in 1849.¹¹

Uncle Lionel's maternal grandfather Ursin was the son of Francois Trepagnier and Louise Daniel.¹² Ursin's paternal grandfather was also named Francois, and he resided in Treme's Fifth Ward as early as 1860.¹³ Ursin's father, Francois, mustered into the Confederate Army as an original member of the Louisiana Native Guards Militia on May 2, 1861, and, in turn, he volunteered in the Union Army on July 2, 1863, in Company A, Sixth Regiment, Louisiana Infantry (African Descent).¹⁴

As a soldier, Francois Trepagnier's duty was to learn drills and tactics that included formation of lines, marching, and battle formations; the most advanced likely being the first line and the second line. He did not see action in battle as did some soldiers of African descent, but he directly experienced and participated in the socio-psychological battle for black freedom,

equality, and independence on the streets of New Orleans by marching in drills, parades, and in the funeral procession of black Union officer Andre Cailloux on July 29, 1863.¹⁵

In 1887 a Marie Trepagnier was on a committee that organized a "Grand Dancing Festival" given by the Club du Foyer D'Amitié at the St. Angele & St. Alexis Hall on Bayou Road (Gov. Nicholls) between Villere and Robertson streets.¹⁶ It is possible that this was Lionel's grandmother. Ernest "Nenesse" Trepagnier (1890–1968) played bass drum with the Excelsior, Onward, and Tuxedo brass bands, as well as drums with Clarence Williams, Manuel Perez, Armand J. Piron, the Olympia Orchestra and many others.¹⁷

Uncle Lionel did not necessarily know or have knowledge of any of the aforementioned Trepagniers, but he was related to them. Only Lionel's older brothers and sisters had direct contact with their grandparents Marie and Ursin Trepagnier. But, the multi-generational spiritual influence of great uncle John Batiste and the experience of the struggle for freedom and equality manifested by marching in the streets as done by their great grandfather Francois Trepagnier were deeply rooted in Lionel's immediate family as deeply rooted as the trait that they spoke both French and English at home.

* * * *

Walter and Alma Batiste lived with Marie Trepagnier for at least the first twelve years of their marriage. In 1910 they resided at 936 St. Claude Street. The Treme neighborhood then included Germans, French, Hispanic and Latin Americans, Yugoslavians, Africans and Afro-Caribbeans, people of mixed heritage, and a preponderance of Italians.¹⁸ Down from the Batistes lived the Tessitore family, who owned and ran a grocery and saloon at 942 St. Claude. The two families were close for many years. "I was born on the second floor above the Caldonia," Uncle Lionel once told me as we walked past the corner of St. Philip and St. Claude. "Man, they made some noise there. My mother used to cook for them."¹⁹

By 1932, when Uncle Lionel was born, the family had moved around the corner to 1215 St. Philip.²⁰ "When I was young, St. Claude had blacks on one side and whites on the other. St. Philip was mostly black, but on Ursulines Street it was mostly white – they were mostly Italians."²¹ "[At 1300 Ursulines] there was a little store. That's where we'd go for ice cream. We couldn't go inside. We got served at the window. The Pericones had that. Down the block [1100] lived the Brocattos and Camporas. They owned sweet shops, bakeries – confectionaries, we called them."²²

Lionel's father, Walter Sr., for a time worked at Routher's Bakery on Orleans Avenue, and his mother, Alma, took in wash at home. His mother and his oldest sisters Alma and Elvidge became active in the Spiritual Church. His mother was a charter member of the Three Star Temple Spiritual Church in 1941,²³ and active with the Channel of Faith Spiritual Church and the St. Joseph Helping Hand Spiritual Church of Love; as well as the Crescent City Temple No. 135 (Eastern Stars) and the Daughter's of the Elks. She respectfully elevated to the position of Reverend Mother Sister Alma Batiste, as did her daughter Reverend Mother Sister Elvidge Batiste Colar.²⁴

As a child Uncle Lionel, like many youngsters who grew up near the French Quarter, hustled money by shining shoes and tap dancing. Sometimes he joined the famed dancers Pork Chop and Kidney Stew on Bourbon Street. He followed in the footsteps of his family, carrying on their own down home musical entertainment and Mardi Gras traditions.

"My mom organized the Baby Dolls."²⁵ On Mardi Gras the Batiste women and friends wore bright colored satin baby doll outfits with bonnets, blouses, short skirts, and baby doll socks and shoes. In high satire they would strike an innocent, naive pose and then shake what their momma gave them, kick their legs high, and parade in the streets.

"My daddy played banjo and guitar. He mostly entertained us. He always kept instruments in the house. Guitars, banjos, ukuleles, kazoos; we didn't have any horns. We played to entertain ourselves and sometimes at backyard parties, fish fries, that sort of thing."²⁶ The Batiste men formed the Dirty Dozen Kazoo Band. They played banjos, guitars, ukuleles, drums, and kazoos. Parading together on Mardi Gras Day the Baby Dolls and Dirty Dozen Kazoo Band created a scene as surreal as any created by Guillaume Appolinaire. "Sometimes the men wore diapers. They'd take mustard and put a stain down the back."²⁷ They played whenever the urge struck them but, above all, they paraded every year on Mardi Gras Day for decades.

Speaking the "dozens" or "dirty dozens" is a tradition of street corner verbal sparring, mostly done in fun, sometimes combining ribald language with the elocution of a recitation by Langston Hughes. Today this custom is acknowledged with lines like, "Your mama's so old that on her birth certificate it says expired," or in return, "Your mama's so large that when she sits down she resides in four states." It is not a coincidence that Lionel's brother Rodney was known as "Mr. Precisely" simply for his ability and habit to deliver the word "P-R-E-C-I-S-E-L-Y" with perfect timing and finesse.²⁸ It was from this oral tradition that the Dirty Dozen Kazoo Band took its name.

The Baby Dolls and Dirty Dozen Kazoo Band performed songs associated with New Orleans, including "The Saints," "Margie," "Eh Las Bas," "Closer Walk With Thee," "The Second Line," and "Over In Gloryland." They did a comical version of the Ray Charles hit "I've Got A Woman." The men sang, "I've got a woman," the women responded, "I've got a man," respectively followed by "and she's good to me," "and he's good to me."

One song they called "The Pecker Song" was sung to the melody of "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow," and included multiple refrains of the lyrics:

*The man played with his pecker,
The man played with his pecker,
The man played with his pecker-r-r-r-r,
His pecker don't peck no more.*

*His pecker don't peck no more,
His pecker don't peck no more,
The man played with his pecker-r-r-r-r,
His pecker don't peck no more.*

They created a heavy rhythmical blend of marching strings with snare and bass drum. The voices and kazoos carried the melody, and the rhythm varied from military cadence to intense syncopation with stop time to multiple layers of rhythms, at times building into cacophony. When appropriate, the kazoos mimicked the horn section of a brass band.

On occasion Uncle Lionel referred to the kazoo as a mirliton; mirliton being the French word for kazoo, as a result of sixteenth-century French colonization of Western African regions. Mirliton classifies a body of instruments created on the African continent from which it is possible the American kazoo was derived, signifying an instrument made from a gourd, bone, or reed,



The Baby Dolls and the Dirty Dozen Kazoo Band parading on a Mardi Gras Day. (l to r): Miriam Batiste Reed, tambourine; Norman Batiste, bass drum; Felicia Batiste Shezbie, baby doll; Uncle Lionel Batiste, banjo-ukulele and kazoo. In rear with sailor's cap is Ferdinand Batiste (photo by Maria Zuniga-Lott, from the author's personal collection)

with a membrane to vibrate when the player hums into it. Such instruments were utilized in various West African societies in ritual and religious ceremonies similar to those conducted by the Dirty Dozen Kazoo Band and Baby Dolls on Mardi Gras. Dissonance created by multiple vocalized kazoos blown simultaneously atop multiple rhythms abruptly engaged the mental and physical space of bystanders, allowing the procession to move easily through large gatherings.

The current origin story of blacks masking "Baby Doll" on Mardi Gras in New Orleans is derived from a single oral history collected by black journalist Robert McKinney from "Baby Doll" Beatrice Hill in 1940.²⁹ Hill's account of initiating the first group to mask as baby dolls in 1912 is a colorful tale of prostitutes, Storyville, and one-upmanship, but there is no direct evidence to support it; basing the history of the "Baby Doll" tradition on a single retrospective account is problematic and inconclusive.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in New Orleans and throughout the United States, the term "baby doll" was replete in ambiguity. Usage of "baby doll" encompassed multidimensional recognition and broad scopes of description, interpretation, and expression, blind of age, race, gender, religion, and social status. This was especially



Big-Baby Dance

For Grown-Ups
at
**Tokio
Gardens**
Wednesday Night
June 11th
**SPANISH
FORT**
Under Supervision
of Prof. C. E. Morton
Music by
Beyersdorffer's
Orchestra

PRIZES
for
Biggest Big Baby
Best Baby Doll
Best Bobbed Baby
Best Baby Dancers

Dancing Until Midnight

Left: A vintage "Baby Doll" chorus girl in costume (Portland Oregonian, September 29, 1919). Above: Ad for a "Big-Baby Dance" in New Orleans (New Orleans Times-Picayune, June 10, 1924).

relevant during the latter decades of the women's suffrage movement, when "baby doll" could denote subservience or autonomy.

"Baby doll" as a black colloquialism is found in multiple songs, as well as in early vaudeville, minstrel, and burlesque performances black and white. In the spring of 1909 white blackface comedians Henry Armstrong and Billy Clark came to New Orleans on the strength of their new song "Baby Doll." On April 18, 1909, the announcement of a weeklong vaudeville revue at the Orpheum Theater contains, "Two celebrated song writers...whose latest success, 'Baby Doll,' is well known to Crescent Cityites."³⁰ On April 20 a reviewer noted, "Easily the best feature of the bill are Armstrong and Clarke, the songwriters who wrote 'Sweet Angeline' [sic, 'Sweet Adeline'], and 'Can't You See I'm Lonely?' and who are delightful entertainers. One of them [Armstrong] has a rich barytone voice, and the other [Clark] is a clever comedian. The latter's singing of 'Doll Baby' [sic, 'Baby Doll'] – a bright and haunting coon song – alone makes the bill worth while."³¹

The Harry Von Tilzer Music Publishing Company of New York published Armstrong and Clark's "Baby Doll" in 1908. Before the end of that year, it was highlighted by black vaudeville and minstrel show performers throughout the South. Dunmore's Modern Minstrels reported from Macon Mississippi: "Miss Aldosla Myers, our clever soubrette, is making them scream with 'Baby Doll';"³² at the Gem Theater in Memphis, Tennessee, there was "Madam Elnora Hunt, the lady with the phenomenal baritone voice, who takes two and three encores nightly featuring

'Down in Jungle Town' and 'Baby Doll' and setting the audience wild with her buck dancing;³³ and in Jacksonville, Florida, Miss Gertrude Williams was "cleaning up singing 'Baby Doll'" at the Exchange Garden Theater, while Mrs. Perkins was "'mopping up' with 'Down in Jungle Town' and 'Baby Doll'" at the Palace.³⁴

"Baby Doll" is easily adaptable to a male or female perspective. The repeated chorus is:

*Of all the names I love to hear it is Baby Doll, Baby Doll
Of all the names I love to be called that's the best of all, Baby Doll
Oh sweetie dear to me is mild, I don't care nothing bout y'ore Angel child
But if you want to set me wild call me Baby Doll – Doll –*

On June 21, 1909, a writer for the *Times-Picayune* reported, "After hearing Nina Seamans sing 'Call Me Baby Doll' you will realize that ditty is a coon song epic. Miss Seamans has a pretty face and a pretty figure, but her distinguishing quality in the tribe of soubrettes is an utter lack of consciousness."³⁵ A 1913 report of burlesque at the Greenwall Theater in New Orleans informed, "'Tangled Up' the second burlesque is by George Milton who has the leading part in it ... 'The Baby Doll Chorus' is one of the numbers."³⁶

During the 1915 Carnival season, news from the black Iroquois Theater on South Rampart Street noted, "Seals & Fisher is the one big talk of the Crescent City. The act is one of the best seen here. The patrons and manager of the Theatre are more than pleased with the Seal's & Fisher act."³⁷ Baby Franklin Seals was one of the most influential black vaudeville performers of the day. His stage partner Baby Floyd Fisher was widely known as "the Memphis Baby Doll."³⁸

It was also in 1915 that local black composers and musicians Clarence Williams and Armand J. Piron wrote, published, and performed "Brown Skin Who, You For," which became enormously popular in the city. The chorus starts with:

*I'm going back to old Tennessee
Brown Skin come and go with me
Be my baby doll, two live as one, how happy we'll be...*³⁹

One of the most crowd-pleasing songs of the World War I era was Shelton Brooks's "Darktown Strutters' Ball," which can still be heard in New Orleans. The second verse is:

*We'll meet our high-toned neighbors,
An exhibition of the "Baby Dolls," –
And each one will do their best, –
Just to outclass all the rest, –
And there'll be dancers from every foreign land, –
The classic, buck and wing, and the wooden clog: –
We'll win that fifty dollar prize –
When we step out and "Walk the Dog."⁴⁰*

The composer's grandson Geoffrey Brooks explained the inspiration of the song: "there was a formal dance held in Chicago once a year for those who you might say 'practiced the oldest profession in the world' and their associates. That was their night that they suffered no oppression and were not bothered very much if at all by the local authorities.... [I]t was a marvelous occasion looked forward to each year by thousands."⁴¹

Upon the publication of "Dark Town Strutters' Ball" in 1917, music stores in New Orleans advertised the sheet music for sale, along with three different player piano rolls; one standard,

one for four hands, and one with a lyric sheet included. That same year it was recorded by at least three musical groups, including the Original Dixieland Jazz Band.⁴² On Friday, November 16, 1917, the annual Newcomb College Junior Party for the freshmen class included a minstrel show: "The music was furnished by the Sophomore orchestra... The minstrel performance was given in approved style except that the usual dusky gentlemen were assisted by 'colored girls' dressed in vivid colors. 'Call Me Shine' was the opening chorus; and 'You're a Pretty Doll,' 'I'm a Real Con [sic] Mamma,' 'Darktown Strutters' Ball,' and 'Robinson Crusoe' were sung during the performance."⁴³

The grand reopening of the Jefferson Park racetrack in November 1917 was big news. One front page story attributed to "The War Widow" states, " When we arrive there are fully 4,000 people swarming on the turf and grandstand, where a disconcerting band insists on getting every one to their feet with a bar or two from the national anthem, and then taking them joyously on to the 'Darktown Strutters' Ball.'"⁴⁴

In 1917 John Robichaux orchestrated "Darktown Strutters' Ball" for his band, and it is likely they performed it at the Lyric Theater, "America's Largest and Finest Colored Playhouse" at Iberville and Burgundy Street during the period 1919 – 1926.⁴⁵ George W. Thomas, the black composer and performer who wrote "New Orleans Hop Scop Blues" in 1916, entered the fray in 1919 with "Sweet Baby Doll," which he co-wrote with Wilbur Le Roy and published from his office at 328 South Liberty Street. The King Oliver Jazz Band with Louis Armstrong recorded it in 1923 and Okeh Records released it in 1924.⁴⁶ The song includes the line, "I love this baby doll, indeed I do," and ends with "Come share your life with me sweet baby doll..."⁴⁷

In August 1920 black construction steel worker Phil Cooley drew attention for his fearlessness. He rode a chain-hoisted steel beam up and down fourteen floors in construction of the Whitney Bank Annex on Common Street, dancing and singing:

*Jazz Baby, Jazz Baby!
Oh, you jazzy baby Doll!
I love my girl, and she loves only me!
I kiss for my girl, and she kisses for me!
Oh, you jazz baby doll!*⁴⁸

On February 20, 1922, it was advertised that, "The Child's Welfare association of Algiers will give a Baby Doll Ball at the Alhambra Club building Monday evening [Lundi Gras] at 8:30 o'clock to raise funds for a milk station."⁴⁹ On June 7, 1924, the Times-Picayune alerted the public: "Prizes Are Offered in Big Baby Dance: ... in Tokio Gardens at Spanish Fort, Professor C. Eddie Morton, director of the dance pavilion announced ... Prizes will be awarded for the biggest big baby, the best baby doll, the best bobbed baby, and the best baby dancers. The prizes will be awarded to participants over 16 years old."⁵⁰

The first week of December 1926 the Lyric Theater featured Bessie Smith, " acclaimed the greatest negro stage star in the United States today"⁵¹ The year she co-wrote, recorded and released the slow grinding and sensuous blues song, "Baby Doll."

*I want to be somebody's baby doll
So I can get my lovin' all the time
I want to be somebody's baby doll
To ease my mind...*⁵²

An idea that may be overstated in the current literature about the tradition of masking “Baby Doll” is its relationship to prostitution and Storyville. Taking into consideration Alma Batiste’s deep love and devotion to her family, when she “organized the ‘Baby Dolls,’” as reported by Uncle Lionel, there existed a diverse cultural environment and ample opportunity for multiple exposures and experiences of “Baby Doll” roles for her to draw from.

For Alma Batiste to mask “Baby Doll,” before or after her ascension to Reverend Mother Sister in the Spiritual Church, was for her to take possession of the character and to encourage an open mind to any observer’s preconceived notions. Being “Baby Doll” was a means to acknowledge, accept, liberate, and celebrate womanhood, from innocent and virginal to down-to-earth and unrepressed, through joyous song, dance, fashion, and procession on Mardi Gras Day.

The parading of the Baby Dolls and Kazoo Band was one aspect of the tradition of marching and second line culture engrained in the Batiste family. Francois Trepagnier (Lionel’s maternal great grandfather) learned the basics of the “evolutions of the line” as a soldier in the Civil War, as did the majority of enlisted men. In New Orleans, the term “second line” has come to represent a complete social subculture. It is used to identify a parade, funeral, music, dance, and the participants in this culture. As Danny Barker said, “This brass band music, the second line, should be preserved and taught in the schools because it is history. It is an important part of America’s history.”⁵³

The “second line” originated as a military battle formation; the term was coined in ancient Rome from the Latin, “acies duplex.”⁵⁴ In 1835 General Winfield Scott formalized the military terminology “line” and “second line” in the United States in his three-volume work, *Infantry Tactics or Rules for the Exercise and Maneuvers of the United States Army*.⁵⁵ A complete section of this work is titled “Evolutions of the Line.”⁵⁶ In 1841 General Scott became Commanding General of the United States Army and held this post for twenty-two years. During the Civil War, “Evolutions of the Line,” was adapted and revised in multiple Union and Confederate publications including the Union’s Army Officers Pocket Companion.⁵⁷

Elks Parade, 1953 - the first line (photo by Ralston Crawford, courtesy Ralston Crawford Collection of Jazz Photography, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).





YMOBA parade with the George Williams Brass Band, 1958 - the first line is marching in the street and the second line on the sidewalk (photo by Ralston Crawford, courtesy Ralston Crawford Collection of Jazz Photography, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).

The character, form, and music of the second line that Uncle Lionel played an integral role in during his life evolved directly from the era of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Louisiana. By the late 1860s black Benevolent and Mutual Aide societies were holding annual parades. The phrase "line of march" appears in print in 1887 in connection with a black social function held by the Unity Hope Circle: "two hundred ladies and gentlemen took up the line of march ... The Crescent City Band ... and W. M. Jackson as leader furnished excellent music."⁵⁸

The term "second line" was propelled into American popular culture and New Orleans mainstream vernacular during World War I. In 1917 and 1918 rarely a day went by without news headlines and reports of "the line of battle" or "second line of defense." Citizen support for the war effort was encouraged as a "second line" of battle or defense. Soon schools, banks, insurance and medical companies began using such phrases in their advertising. Professional and amateur football teams adopted the terminology and formation in their plans and playbooks.

* * * *

When Louis Jordan sang "Saturday Night Fish Fry," or Smiley Lewis "Blue Monday," they could have easily been singing about the Batiste family. As black New Orleans and American music evolved, some black New Orleanians diversified their style by combining music labeled jazz, blues, boogie-woogie, gospel, brass band, and Latin and Afro Caribbean sounds into a new serving called rhythm and blues, later known as rock and roll, and Uncle Lionel feasted at the table.

By the mid 1940s the Batistes had moved to 1322 St. Philip. Across the street was the Nelson family at 1323 and the Guichard family at 1321.⁵⁹ The elder Alfred Guichard played saxophone and clarinet and sang with the Joe Robichaux Orchestra through the 1930s.⁶⁰ Walter



**Line Up and Sign Up
June 21 to 28**

ENLIST as a war saver in the great army that stays at home--
the second line of defense behind our boys in the first
line trenches.

In New Orleans the Drive for War Savings Stamps Begins
Friday, June 21, and Ends Friday, June 28, Known as
National War Savings Day

Now's the time to prove your patriotism by investing a definite amount
in War Savings Stamps each month during 1918.
Saving for such a noble purpose should be a pleasure, a glad duty.

New Orleans MUST Pledge Eight Million Dollars
This is no small sum. It means that every man, every woman, every child, every corporation and firm that can afford it must
Join the \$1000 Limit Club

Time will cancel interest that amount will be called upon to pay to the limit of their resources.
"Strong arm" methods, you'll say. Yes, but it's for your own good. There's a strong arm "over there" that's ready and willing to work against you.

W. S. S. Cost \$4.17 in June Worth \$5.00 on Jan. 1, 1923
Give the Limit---Line Up and Sign Up

This Space Contributed to Winning the War By
Maison Blanche
MAISON BLANCHE

W.S.S.
WAR SAVINGS STAMPS
ISSUED BY THE
UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT

Above: "The second line of defense behind our boys
in the first line trenches" (*New Orleans Item*, June 17,
1918). Right: "Digging The Second Line Trenches"
(*New Orleans Item*, April 15, 1917).



Nelson Sr., a.k.a. "Guitar Black," played with many of the area jazzmen and with Smiley Lewis early in his career. He fathered Walter Nelson, Jr. ("Papoose"), who played guitar with Professor Longhair and Fats Domino; and Lawrence Nelson ("Prince La La"), who in 1961 scored a national hit record with "She Put the Hurt On Me."⁶¹

These three families – the Batistes, Nelsons, and Guichards – helped put the "monkey shine" into the "Monkey Puzzle," a popular good-time apartment house on the same block that composer and drummer James Black (who lived on Ursulines Street) immortalized in his composition of the same name.⁶² "Old Man Nelson, Kid Howard, Slow Drag Pavageau, Alton Purnell, Sidney Brown, Chester Jones [Benny Jones's father] and his family, Old Man Picou [Alphonse], Burnell Santiago, Jim Robinson - some great musicians lived near us. Once, when I was just a kid, Jim Robinson was being mean and my brother and I filled a bag with horseshit, lit it on fire, and threw it on his porch. We rang the doorbell and ran off. He didn't say much to me after that."⁶³

Down the street at 942 St. Claude, Michael Tessitore turned the family grocery and saloon into the Caldonia Inn. This is where Henry Roeland Byrd received the nickname Professor Longhair. Dave Bartholomew, Roy Brown, Louis Jordan, and many others played there. It was also the scene of infamous late-night drag queen shows. Caddy-corner at 1201 St. Philip was TBoys Shoe Shine. Dominique "TBoy" Remy led the Eureka Brass Band through the late 1930s and early 1940s. At the corner of Gov. Nicholls and Marais was Lucius Bridges Bicycle Repair, where Bridges, Brother Percy Randolph, Walter Nelson Sr. and Jr., Babe Stovall, sometimes Uncle

Lionel, and others held impromptu jam sessions. Back in those days Uncle Lionel's peers knew him as "Buddy Buddy." The Batiste family patronized their neighborhood music and cultural spots including Picou's Bar, the Gypsy Tea Room, Economy Hall, San Jacinto Hall, Mama Ruth's Cozy Corner, the Hi-Hat Club, Claiborne Theater, Prout's Club Alhambra, Municipal Auditorium, and others.

Community engagement played an important role in Uncle Lionel's life. He and his brothers Ferdinand, Rodney, Henry, and Arthur and sister Felecia joined social aide and pleasure clubs including the Square Deal, Golden Trumpets, Sixth Ward Diamonds, Treme Sports, Money Wasters, Mellow Boys & Girls, and Sixth Ward High Steppers. They participated in these organizations' annual parades, jazz funerals, fund raising events, and aide activities such as feeding the poor, burying the dead, sheltering the homeless, and visiting and caring for the sick and shut-in.

Equally significant was their involvement in the Spiritual Church, where individuality, women's leadership, respect for ancestors, and music was highly valued. Most of the Batiste family frequented the Calvary Spiritual Church, 1229 St. Philip Street, and the Helping Hand Spiritual Church, 1320 North Robertson.⁶⁴

* * * *

In the 1960s, the brass bands that played the majority of downtown parades and funerals were the Eureka, the Olympia led by Harold Dejan, and, by the early 1970s, Floyd Anckle's Majestic Brass Band. Occasionally Uncle Lionel would play with the Olympia. Danny Barker, seeing a decline in young musicians, established, along with Rev. Andrew Darby, the Fairview Baptist Church Marching Band in 1970, led by Leroy Jones. The popularity of the Fairview Band contributed to new generations of brass bands. By the mid-1980s Uncle Lionel was playing bass drum and singing regularly with Anthony "Tuba Fats" Lacen and the Chosen Few Brass Band. In 1986 he toured England and Scotland with Tuba Fats, and they returned to England in 1987.



Above left: Benny Jones., Sr. (photo by Michael P. Smith, from the author's personal collection). Above right: The Dirty Dozen Brass Band at a community picnic (photo by Michael P. Smith, from the author's personal collection).

In the Treme: Jim Robinson, Sidney Brown, and Benny Jones's older brother Eugene, sitting on Sidney Brown's stoop in the 1300 block of St. Philip Street (photo by Ralston Crawford, courtesy Ralston Crawford Collection of Jazz Photography, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).



Benny Jones played a pivotal role in the revival of the brass band tradition of the 1970s. As a founder of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band and as a drummer he kept the beat firmly in the New Orleans parade tradition: "I like to keep the beat in the pocket," he said. "That way, no matter what direction the horns take, we still keep the New Orleans sound in the music."⁶⁵ The Dirty Dozen Brass Band took their name from the Dirty Dozen Kazoo Band. The band grew organically from when Benny Jones and others began playing in the Kazoo Band and then formed the Dirty Dozen Brass Band that blossomed into an international success story.

When Benny formed the Treme Brass Band c. 1994 he combined music veterans with young, fiery players. Uncle Lionel, with his singing, dancing, and drumming quickly emerged as a leading personality in the group. Uncle's syncopation, a throwback to his early days as a tap dancer and member of the Dirty Dozen Kazoo Band, was unique even among New Orleans drummers. His singing combined gospel and blues with 1920s and 1930s vaudeville standards. He was more of the vocal school of Ray Charles than, say, Louis Armstrong or Jelly Roll Morton.

With the Treme Brass Band Uncle Lionel recorded three CDs: "Gimme My Money Back" for Arhoolie Records; "New Orleans Music" for Mardi Gras Records; and a private recording with the Austrian banjo player Werner Tritta. He is the featured vocalist on the CD "Lars Edegran Presents Uncle Lionel" on GHB Records.

A chapter of Mick Burns's book *Keeping the Beat on the Street* is devoted to Uncle Lionel. He is featured in the film, "No Mouse Music," a documentary on the life of Chris Strachwitz, founder of Arhoolie Records. Following Hurricane Katrina, Uncle Lionel received national recognition featured in works by Spike Lee, the HBO TV series "Treme," and TV commercials.

The life of Lionel Batiste was "no accident," and neither are the history, culture, and socio-economic realities of the New Orleans that he lived in. The Batiste family and the second liners of Uncle Lionel's generation reshaped and enlivened the tradition of "the line" with inalienable and reclaimed African dance forms and spirit. The Civil and Human Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s inspired and perpetuated new freedoms in the tradition.

To march in the streets like Uncle Lionel and his ancestors marched in the streets was a way to celebrate life and to create an experience and expression of personal and unified

freedom. It was a way to actively participate in Reconstruction and stand against segregation and build momentum and motivation for change and perhaps to open doors to new possibilities, as did Homer Plessy when he boarded that train or Martin Luther King, Jr. and others marched on Selma. Uncle Lionel frequently said, "Take your time Neph. Take your time," not to encourage a laid-back laissez faire approach to life but to encourage the patience required to "Get it right!" And Uncle Lionel sure did.

Thanks to Lynn Abbott, Rick Coleman, Alaina W. Hebert, Alana Jones, Benny Jones, and Bruce Raeburn for help in the researching and writing of this article.

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Claude Blanchard's Orchestra and Affiliates in Texas: An Update on the Ongoing Research

By Kathryn Hobgood Ray

In the 2013 issue of *The Jazz Archivist*, I discussed the musical reign of trumpet player Claude Blanchard and his orchestra in Bogalusa, Louisiana, 1920-1922. This group, also known as Blanchard's Jazz Hounds, was among the first organized white jazz bands on the Northshore of Lake Pontchartrain. During its brief local run, Blanchard's Orchestra matched the popularity — at least among lovers of Terpsichore in the Northshore towns — of bands led by such jazz pioneers as Bud Scott, Buddy Petit, and Claiborne Williams.

When Claude Blanchard left Bogalusa for Houston in November 1922 to take "a position as private secretary to one of the high officials of the Southern Pacific,"¹ his orchestra disbanded. Claude's sister Inez Blanchard, a conservatory-trained pianist, had already left the band—she married Major Jack Friend, an executive at the International Paper Company, and eventually settled in southern Alabama. The band's guitar/banjo virtuoso Eddie "Snoozer" Quinn still had some growing up to do—he would not graduate from Bogalusa High School until the summer of 1924.

But the story of Blanchard's Orchestra was far from over. Even as he was pursuing career ambitions in the railroad industry, the industrious Claude was creating musical opportunities in Houston for himself and his fellow Bogalusans—namely piano player Frank Tilton, drummer Newell Tilton, and, eventually, Snoozer Quinn.

* * * * *

When I first began researching Snoozer Quinn, which is what led me to Claude Blanchard, a boon of hometown documentation was immediately evident.² Digging through local newspapers like the *Bogalusa Enterprise & American* and *Bogalusa Daily News*, I discovered a satisfyingly finite work set for the early period of their lives. Mentions of Quinn and Blanchard and their musical exploits appeared with frequency and consistency. However, documenting a band — and a particularly well-connected white band, at that — in its small Louisiana hometown is vastly different from documenting a loose unit of itinerant jazz musicians traveling the Southwest frontier of Texas. Researching Quinn's and Blanchard's paths through Texas is slow, sprawling, and ongoing. Houston, Galveston, Sylvan Beach, Dallas, Laredo, San Antonio, and little towns in between — these are places in Texas where I am working to build a chronology of events. Scouring microfilm for mentions of these musicians in newspapers of major cities offers far less frequent rewards than the little Bogalusa dailies (although the ongoing digitalization of many of these major newspapers promises a tantalizing payday in the near future).

Additionally, I have so far been unsuccessful in accessing the archives of the *American*

Federation of Musicians Local 65 in Houston, where both Blanchard and Quinn were active members.³ Because of my familiarity with the New Orleans musicians' union papers, particularly the Local 174, which are part of the collection at the Hogan Jazz Archive, I know what a treasure trove of information a researcher can find in member records, membership applications, gossipy meeting minutes, and financial ledgers.⁴ I can only imagine what delightful discoveries await in the union records for Houston and Galveston (AFM Local 74), the archives of which were moved to Houston storage facilities owned by Local 65 after a hurricane.

While taking a hiatus from serious archival research this past year, I have made some delightful discoveries and connections, including some real human interactions, which have made researching the Texas era of Blanchard's Orchestra so far deeply rewarding. Through genealogical research, I found that Claude Blanchard had two sons who were born in Houston in the mid-1920s: Claude Blanchard, Jr. and Don Blanchard. In early 2013, I found their addresses (both still in the Houston area), and sent off letters informing them of my research into their father's life. A few weeks later, I got a phone call from Claudia Blanchard, on behalf of her father, Claude, Jr., who at 87-years-old was very much alive. And he wanted to talk to me about his father.

Soon I was enroute to Houston. Not only are the Blanchards delightful people, but the visit had several exciting revelations. It turns out that Claude Blanchard, Sr. documented some of his career with a scrapbook, which the family allowed me to photocopy. The scrapbook is filled with newspaper clippings of Claude's Texas-era gigs in the 1920s-1930s, as well as photographs of some of his bands.

Claude, Jr. was born on May 22, 1925. When he was still a boy, his parents divorced, and the Texas court awarded custody to Claude, Sr. This was an undoubtedly rare decision in the 1920s. Claude, Jr. explained: "My mother was really stage-struck, she wanted to be an actress."⁵ The boys' grandmother moved in to help raise them. Meanwhile, Claude, Sr. continued his heavy touring, and in fact, the boys sometimes traveled with the orchestra.

All of this was happening when Claude, Jr. was still in single digits of age; his memories are vague and could more accurately be called impressions. He remembers that his father was considered very handsome — "Handsome was style. My father was thin, little mustache... He wore spats." Claude, Jr. became fascinated with the chorus girls:

You know, when we traveled, the chorus girls took care of us. I would go in the dressing room; I was fascinated with them. They had these long metal containers for the eye makeup, mascara, they'd put a match on it, and melt it. And then you'd take a little brush, dip it in there, and glob it on your eyes... They were in my estimation very nice girls and took care of us, they weren't what you would say, common. To me, they didn't seem that way, like you might think.⁶

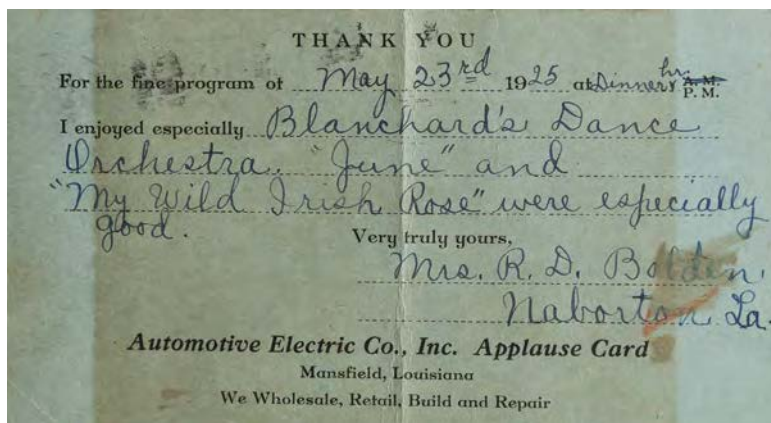
Claude also recalls how the band traveled:

My father, he claimed he invented travel trailers. He made it out of some artificial board—and my father built it, and hooked it on the back of our car... We were in the car, but all of our clothes and instruments would be in the trailer.⁷

The venues were usually motels with ballrooms or clubs attached, and room and board for the band was part of the deal. Claude, Jr. and his brother Don were allowed in the clubs and occasionally performed a novelty song: "My brother and I would sing sort of semi-naughty songs with his band. One of the songs that I recall, let's see.... Something about Dad got the wiener. There was something naughty about that, I don't recall how it all worked out."⁸ Claude, Jr. remembers some of the venues, such as the Rice Hotel, the Aragon Ballroom, and the Lamar Hotel, and that his father "semi-managed" the Club Rendezvous on South Main Street in Houston.



Blanchard's Texas-based Orchestra had many incarnations. In this photo, Claude, Sr. can be seen holding trumpet, fourth from right.



A listener writes in to praise Blanchard's Orchestra and make requests for the following week. Note broadcast from Houston was heard in Naborton, Louisiana, just east of Mansfield.

Selections from Claude Blanchard's Scrapbook...



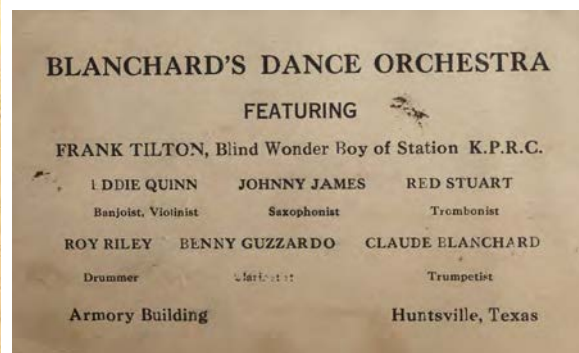
Claude Blanchard, Sr. and his sons Claude Jr. and Don, captured in a happy moment at the beach.



This photo of Johnny Williams's Rhythm Boys includes Claude, Sr. standing third from left. Is it possible that the pianist is Frank Tilton?



Above: An undated clipping from an unidentified newspaper gives the personnel of Chuck Morgan and his Seven Jacks. Right: A publicity photo for the Seven Jacks features band members posing on long-eared jack-asses, property of the Herman Park Zoo. According to an undated newspaper article, left to right are: Paul Sparks, DeWitt Holmes, Jack Pink, Royce West, Claude Blanchard, Benny Guzzardo, and Eddie Edwards.



A card advertisement lists the personnel of Blanchard's Orchestra, including Eddie Quinn.



Blanchard's orchestra with female accordion artist Mae Stoekel. Though not associated with this particular photo, an article from an unidentified newspaper dated November 13, 1931, lists the personnel of Blanchard's Orchestra as: "Claude Blanchard, famous trumpet player and well known entertainer, Charley Phelps, hot saxophone player, Mae Stoekle, accordion artist, Frank Tilton, the famous piano player, Newell Tilton, drummer, and Benny Guzzardo, who plays that moaning saxophone."

The Blanchard scrapbook contains newspaper clippings that help to flesh out Claude Jr.'s recollections. Most of the clippings are undated and many of the sources unidentified, but they nevertheless offer valuable leads on cities, venue names, radio performances, repertoire, and musical associates. They give the impression that Claude Blanchard, Sr. was an important part of the music scene in Texas, especially Houston, in the mid 1920s-mid 1930s.

Among the biggest discoveries gleaned from the scrapbook:

1. Claude Blanchard, Sr. was very active in radio.

In addition to performing regularly on radio station KTRH, he "opened" station KPRC, which was owned by the *Houston Post-Dispatch* newspaper. Broadcasting at 500 watts, the station's inaugural broadcast was on May 9, 1925, and could be heard as far away as Columbus, Ohio, according to laudatory telegrams received by the station.⁹ "I used to go down to the radio station with him," says Claude, Jr. "He opened the station as I recall."¹⁰ An article in the *Houston-Post Dispatch* confirms: "Claude Blanchard's Orchestra has been among the muchly appreciated offering from KPRC since the first week of operation and a return engagement is always looked forward to with favor."¹¹ Adding to the context, on September 19, 1925, this item appeared in the *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*:

*Bogalusa's Claude Blanchard has organized "Blanchard's Orchestra" in Houston, Texas and is broadcasting from KPRC, the Houston Post-Dispatch radio station on Thursday evenings. Blanchard's Orchestra Will Broadcast Tonight: Tonight will be a good time to test out your radio and at the same time hear a local boy broadcast, as the orchestra which Claude Blanchard has organized at Houston, Tex., and known as Blanchard's Orchestra, will be on the air from 7:30 to 8:30 this evening. Two weeks ago when the orchestra broadcast its first program of the season, a clear reception was received in Bogalusa, but last Thursday night the static was bad.*¹²

2. Claude Blanchard, Sr. was a prominent member of the Local 65.

He was the master of ceremonies for a ball given by the Houston Musician's union, which boasted 15 orchestras featuring 150 musicians. The orchestras were Claude Blanchard and His Seven Jacks; Jack Willrich Orchestra; Vernon Reed's Orchestra; Myron Williams's Country Club Orchestra; Tommy Kersey's Orchestra; Kensington Hall Orchestra; Harry Kibusch and his Houstonians; KPRC Staff Orchestra; Metropolitan Stage Orchestra; Loew's State Orchestra; Lloyd C. Finlay, Majestic Theatre Orchestra; Earl McMahon Orchestra; Lee's Owl Orchestra; Henry Lange's Brunswick Recording Orchestra; Tommy Davis Orchestra; Jack Mulvihill's Blue Melody Boys; Lewis Daigle Orioles; Ralph Britt Orchestra; Curtis Smith, Oklahoma University Orchestra; and Paul Berge, Rice Hotel Orchestra.¹³

3. Blanchard's style as a bandleader was playful; he occasionally indulged in "novelty singing."

One article said, "Claude is a show by himself with his trick hats and eccentric positions in which he handles his cornet, and he has promised to shoot the works for our yearly event."¹⁴ The sets were full of vaudevillian flair and featured entertainers like the "tiny girl accordionist" Mae Stoekel and trick banjoists Bob Senay and Eddie Quinn.¹⁵ Some of the promotional taglines for the band were "Lots of Pep to Make You Step" and "Let's Make Whoopee!"¹⁶ A few of the song titles (which are identified in adulatory letters sent by listeners to the *Houston Post-Dispatch*) include "June," "My Wild Rose," and "5 Foot 2 and Eyes of Blue."¹⁷

4. Claude Blanchard, Sr. was invested in the career of fellow Bogalusan Frank Tilton, a blind piano player who moved to Houston around the same time.

Tilton is one of the few musicians Claude, Jr. still recalls. The scrapbook includes numerous clippings and accolades about Tilton, mentioning him with the band and as a soloist, billed as KPRC's "Wonder Boy."

*Tilton's work on the noon program, following the weather forecast, gained a great deal of attention, many long-distance calls being sent in with thanks from the listeners-in. Tilton is only 22, but is already widely known for his highly developed touch on the ivory keys. Tilton also appeared Saturday night at the Post-Dispatch automobile show, as the pianist in Blanchard's orchestra.*¹⁸

5. Eddie Quinn moved to Houston in 1925 and rejoined Blanchard's Orchestra for a short period of time.¹⁹

Quinn does not have a big presence in the scrapbook. But it is apparent that through his association with Blanchard he came to know a litany of players who crop up again and again in the Texas era of his career, playing together in several different configurations and under different band leaders. For example, an early incarnation of Blanchard's Orchestra featured Blanchard on trumpet, Quinn on banjo and violin, Johnny James on saxophone, Lavelle "Red" Stuart on trombone, Roy Riley on drums, and Benny Guzzardo on clarinet.²⁰ Many of these players were also in the Louisiana Ramblers and Peck's Bad Boys, and every member of this lineup except for Blanchard was featured in Mart Britt's Sylvan Beach Orchestra in April 1928. Britt also performed with the Blanchard Orchestra:

*Mart Britt will sing and play the banjo for dances. Mart Britt, popular young Victor record singer and radio entertainer has been engaged as singer and banjoist in Blanchard's Orchestra. Now playing at McMillian's Dancing Academy.*²¹

6. Pianist Peck Kelley was a close musical associate of Claude, Sr. and has a big presence in the scrapbook, including in photos.

They played in several bands together, including a novelty stage band called the Apaches, as well as the Seven Jacks and Johnny Williams' Rhythm Boys. Kelley was an important mentor to Eddie Quinn (Quinn performed in his band Peck's Bad Boys). A trained musician who had studied harmony, music theory, and classical piano, Kelley was widely admired by jazz musicians for his abilities, but he was also known for declining record contracts and for his refusal to leave Texas despite offers from Paul Whiteman, the Dorseys, Benny Goodman, Bob Crosby, Rudy Vallee, Artie Shaw, Guy Lombardo, and numerous other famous bandleaders. An in-depth essay on Kelley's legend was written by Allen Schrader for the *Southwest Review*. Said Schrader:

*Once any conversation they participate in had shifted to the subject of jazz pianists, Jack Teagarden, Harry James, Muggsy Spanier, Ray Bauduc, Sonny Lee, et al., readily cited Kelley's name... and, without exception, ecstatically pointed up the multiple dimensions of his talent.*²²

* * * *

Claude, Jr. recalls having been "maybe around ten or twelve years old" when his father quit the music business (sometime in the mid-1930s):

*Dad needed work. The Depression was here, so Dad moved to Baton Rouge... he worked for... I told you that my aunt was a millionaire, and Jack was high in the company? He would always get dad and all the other relatives jobs... He was very good to his relatives.*²³

Claude, Jr. says that when Claude, Sr. left Texas, he left music behind: "I think this is an interesting thing. When Dad gave up the music business—my father was a very unique kind of man, strong-willed—he sold his trumpet that day. And never played again. The day he quit, he got rid of it."²⁴

No musical recordings are known to exist of Claude Blanchard, Sr., in any of his bands. I hope to uncover more about his career and the exciting Southwest Texas jazz scene that he worked in as I continue this research. Most of the musicians in photographs of Blanchard's various bands and orchestras are unidentified in the family scrapbook. I would be very interested in hearing from other researchers who can offer information about the bands and musicians featured in these photographs.

Endnotes

- 1 "Claude Blanchard Gets Good Job As Secretary," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, November 9, 1922, 8.
- 2 Snoozer Quinn is my relative through paternal lineage and was the subject of my master's thesis ("A Musical Analysis and History of Eddie 'Snoozer' Quinn, Pioneering Jazz Guitarist," Tulane University, 2013).
- 3 The August 1926 issue of *The International Musician* (a publication of the American Federation of Musicians) lists an "Edwin (Pat) Quinn" under new members for Houston's Local 65. Whether or not that entry refers to someone else or is a misspelling of Quinn's name is unclear. However, meeting minutes from August 31, 1928, of the Local 174 in New Orleans confirm that Quinn was a Local 65 member in good standing on transfer in New Orleans.
- 4 See Sue Fisher, "American Federation of Musicians Locals 174 and 496 Records at the Hogan Jazz Archive," *The Jazz Archivist*, vol. xix (2005-2006), for a guide to the Jazz Archive's collection of materials from the local unions.
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- 8 Ibid.
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- 12 Undated *Houston Post-Dispatch* clipping from Blanchard scrapbook.
- 13 Undated clipping from Blanchard scrapbook.
- 14 Clipping dated November 13, 1931, in Blanchard scrapbook.
- 15 Advertisement in Blanchard scrapbook.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Fan card dated May 23, 1925, in Blanchard scrapbook.
- 18 "'Wonder Boy' Opens Brilliant Day Of Broadcast At KPRC," clipping from Blanchard scrapbook, probably from the *Houston Post-Dispatch*. A partially preserved date places it in the edition of September, November, or December 25, 1925.
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The Desdunes Family

By Dan Vernhettes and Peter Hanley

Like many other families (Laveaux, Baquet, Bocage, etc.), the Desdunes family came to Louisiana in the early nineteenth century, following the revolution in Saint-Domingue. In conjunction with the Free Men of Color of New Orleans, Rodolphe Desdunes played an important role in the fight for the social and civil rights of colored people in New Orleans. Rodolphe's sons Daniel and Oscar and his grandson Clarence were important characters in the music field, both in New Orleans and in Omaha, Nebraska, and his daughter Mary/"Mamie" was the blues pianist who influenced Jelly Roll Morton.

From Saint Domingue to New Orleans

The Desdunes family got its name from the little town of Desdunes, which is located in the plain of Arbonite, district of Dessalines, 95 miles north of Port-au-Prince, in Saint-Domingue, now Haiti.¹ The French word "dune" has the same meaning in English, and "des dunes" means "of the dunes." The Artibonite Valley lies along the reaches of the Artibonite River, which rises in the mountains east of Port-au-Prince and runs northwards to the Caribbean Sea, about 25 miles north of St. Marc.

The Desdunes family story begins with Pierre Jérémie and Henriette Desdunes. Jeremie is listed in the 1840 census, living in the Third District with several persons in his household. The 1860, 1880, and 1900 censuses indicate that both were born in Louisiana, probably in New Orleans. The 1860 census has Jeremie Desdunes, 39, a carpenter, with Henriette, 30, living with their sons Aristide, 14; Rodolphe, 10; Elmore, 5; Sarazin, 3; all registered as mulattos.

The 1880 census recorded Jérémie's mother as born in Cuba, but no place of birth for his father (it was undoubtedly Saint-Domingue). Henriette's father was recorded as born in France but the space for the birthplace of her mother was left blank. In 1880 Jérémie was a blacksmith. Father Charles O'Neill, S.J., in his foreword to the English translation of Rodolphe Desdunes's noteworthy book *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire (Our People and Our History)*, wrote that Henriette Desdunes was Cuban, which appears to be incorrect.² Other facts supplied by Rodolphe Desdunes's grandson, Theodore Frère, to Father O'Neill are also incorrect. Pierre Jérémie Desdunes's mother was also named Henriette Desdunes (1803-1883). She, not Pierre Jérémie's wife, was born in Cuba. This is shown in the 1900 census records for Daniel Desdunes (1830-1909), a younger brother of Pierre Jérémie, who also had one sister.

Pierre Jérémie Desdunes married Henriette Angélique Gaillard (also sometimes called Sonty) on February 20, 1849, and they had at least three children: Pierre Aristide, baptized June 4, 1848, age 2 years; Lucien Adolphe (Rodolphe), baptized February 17, 1850, age 3 months (Rodolphe was born November 15, 1849); Joseph, baptized April 18, 1853, age 17 months.³ Pierre Aristide became a cigar maker and a poet, fought in the Civil War in two regiments of the U.S. Colored Troops, served on the board of directors of the Couvent School, and was a civil rights activist.⁴ He married Louise Mathilde Denebourg on August 9, 1873.

The Desdunes family in New Orleans was wealthy; owned a tobacco plantation and also manufactured cigars.⁵ Rodolphe is listed in the 1890 New Orleans City Directory: occupation, cigars, 149 Dauphine Street; and the following year at 149 Burgundy Street, a foreman. According to the 1897 City Directory, he had a shop at 619 North Rampart (lake side). Rodolphe's family is listed in the 1880 census, living at 231 Common Street: R.L., 30 (b. 1849); his wife Mathilde, 28; D. (Daniel), son, 10; Agnes, 7; Louise, 6; W. (Wendell), son, 3½; Mathilde

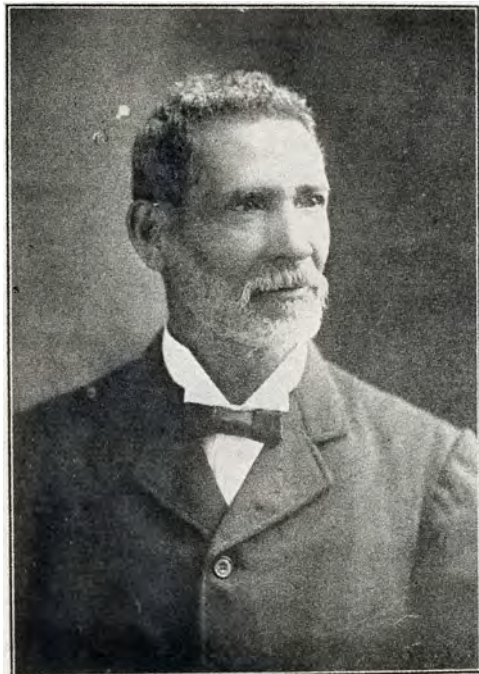
Cheval, 60, mother-in-law.⁶ Other children known were Coritza (b. 1876), Agnes, Lucille, and Jeanne.⁷ The family lived at 928 Marais Street. Like several other historic landmarks, their house has since been razed. The Desdunes family was certainly well off, as the St. Cyr family sold two houses worth \$6,000 to them in 1899.⁸

Rodolphe Desdunes

In the early 1870s, Rodolphe attended law courses at Straight University, and in 1874 he was a member of the Metropolitan Police Force that was attacked by the white vigilantes and suffered eleven dead.⁹ From 1879 to 1885, he worked first as a messenger, then as a clerk for the U.S. Customs Service of New Orleans.¹⁰ He also taught for some time at the Couvent School, created by Mary Couvent in 1848.¹¹ In 1885 he lost his customs job, but returned in 1891, until 1894, then resumed his job a third time from 1899 to 1912.¹² At this time he was a member of the Lodge Amite Sincere No. 27.¹³ According to a passport application signed by him on June 5, 1896, Rodolphe Desdunes was 7 feet, 10 and-a-half inches tall, which might be a clerical error.

When Napoleon Bonaparte sold Louisiana in 1803, the treaty guaranteed each person who had lived under French law all the rights of United States citizens. Difficulties started between the newcomers to Louisiana -- Anglophone and Protestant -- and the established Free Men of Color -- Catholic and Francophone. By the mid-1850s some Creole-of-Color families had migrated to Mexico, and later to Haiti, escaping the harassment in Louisiana.¹⁴ In 1858, Emile Desdunes (perhaps Jérémie's brother), born in New Orleans, acted as an immigration agent for Emperor Faustin I Soulouque of Haiti. His duties included assisting the Creoles of Color to migrate to Haiti. Emile died in Port-au-Prince, around 1862.¹⁵

In 1877, after the Reconstruction period, the Federal Government abandoned Louisiana to the white supremacists; the political environment changed, and the Creoles of Color were denied their rights. In 1889, notary and attorney Louis André Martinet (1849-1917) started



Rodolphe Desdunes, as depicted in *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire* (courtesy Louisiana Research Collection, Tulane University).

publishing a Republican newspaper, the *Crusader*; printed in French and English, the *Crusader* aimed to inform and rally black and Creole leaders to challenge the new segregation laws.¹⁶ After the Separate Car Act was passed in 1890, Rodolphe Desdunes and Louis André Martinet formed the Comité des Citoyens, which enlisted Rodolphe's eldest son Daniel Desdunes to violate this act.¹⁷ On February 24, 1892, Daniel boarded a white-only car on a train bound for Mobile, Alabama; the train was stopped at the corner of Elysian Fields and Claiborne, and Daniel was arrested and removed to the precinct. Shortly thereafter, Judge J. H. Ferguson ruled that enforcement of the Separate Car Act upon interstate travel was unconstitutional because only the federal government had the authority to regulate interstate commerce.¹⁸

After this victory, the Comité again attempted to test the law, this time focusing on intrastate travel. Homer Plessy (1863-1925), a shoemaker, was recruited for this purpose. On June 7, 1892, he boarded a first class car of the East Louisiana Railroad to Covington, was asked to seat in the car for colored passengers, and then was forcibly dragged out of the coach.¹⁹

The Comité brought the case all the way to the United States Supreme Court, which ruled four years later, on May 18, 1896, that Plessy's constitutional rights had

not been violated by Louisiana law.²⁰ Later, Rodolphe Desdunes would write that, "our defeat sanctioned the odious principle of the segregation of the races."²¹ The Comité disbanded, and the *Crusader* ceased publication.

A copy of the *Republican Courier* shows that Rodolphe Desdunes resigned from the Republican Committee in 1900, during a meeting held at 139 Decatur Street. While he was supervising the weighing of cargo on a ship for the Customhouse in 1908, granite dust blew in his eyes, leaving him legally blind.²² Fortunately, he had already completed the manuscript of *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*. After his retirement the following year, Rodolphe went to Omaha, Nebraska, where his son Daniel was living, and purchased a house. The January 1920 census shows him living at 2213 North Twenty-Fifth Street with his wife Mathilde, their son Wendell, 43, a carpenter; daughter Jeanne, 27, musician in orchestra; and Francisco, a seven-year-old adopted son. Rodolphe died on August 14, 1928, of cancer of the larynx.²³ His daughter, Mrs. Coritza Mora (New Orleans, November 17, 1876 - Los Angeles, March 15, 1967) arranged for his remains to be sent from Omaha to New Orleans, where he was interred in the family tomb in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 (Square 3), near his Creole comrades.²⁴ In addition to his civil rights work, he may be remembered for his book, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, which celebrates the work of Louisiana Creoles of Color in art, literature, music, invention, philanthropy, and other fields of endeavor.

Daniel F. Desdunes

Rodolphe Desdunes's son Dan (b. 1873) attended local New Orleans public schools and then went to Straight University.²⁵ After college, he worked as a house painter, while playing and teaching music.²⁶ By 1892 he was the violinist, baritone, and co-leader of the Coustaut-Desdunes band that included cornetists Sylvester Coustaut (b. 1861), violinist O'Neill Levasseur, and trombonist George Filhe (b. 1872). According to Filhé, they played quadrilles and schottishes in a straight way, but had a nice swing.²⁷

Dan married Victoria Oliver in 1895, and their son Clarence was born on February 17, 1896. Victoria died shortly afterwards, and Dan married Madia Dodd.²⁸ He became a member of the Société des Jeunes Amis, with Philip Nickerson, the son of Professor William Nickerson.²⁹ He also became a member of the Onward Brass Band.

Like several other Creoles of Color, Dan started traveling professionally with African-American road shows, playing, composing, directing, staging, and acting. According to an unpublished seven-page history of contributions of black artists to the musical culture of Omaha, Nebraska, he went out with a minstrel show as early as 1894.³⁰ By the spring of 1897 he was the orchestra leader and a member of the parade band with P. T. Wright's Nashville Students, under bandmaster P. G. Lowery.³¹ The Indianapolis *Freeman* of January 8, 1898, relayed this news from P. G. Lowery and the Nashville Students:

The company is doing a good business and are as happy as can be in their \$10,000 palace car, which is rated as the best car occupied by a colored company. Mr. P. T. Wright spares no pains nor money in securing the best people, and Mr. Harry Gilliam, the stage manager, has arranged the program in the most tasty style from start to finish. Prof. Dan Desdunes, the music composer of the company and orchestra leader has the only all-schooled musicians of any colored orchestra in the profession, and their concert band under the directorship of the talented young director P. G. Lowery, late from Boston, is pronounced by the public to be the finest concert band on the road. Why? Because it has no would be players in its ranks. The following is direct from the pen of Mr. P. G. Lowery: Mr. Editor – Dear Sir, below you will find the names of the members of my concert band now with the Nashville Students. Since studying the finest arts of music and carefully drilling my band for three months, I have no hesitancy in

saying I register below eleven, among which is six soloists as follows: J. A. Stewart, tuba; M. McQuility [sic, McQuitty], baritone; E. O. Green, slide trombone; D. F. Desdunes, alto; L. E. Gideon, cornet; and as a soloist myself I have no colored rivals, yet there is room at the top. Below is my band: P. G. Lowery, cornet and director; L. E. Gideon, cornet; F. C. Richardson, clarinet; D. F. Desdunes, solo alto; Harry Gilliam, 1st alto; E. O. Green, solo trombone; Ed McGruder, 2nd trombone; M. McQuility, baritone; J. A. Stewart, tuba; A. P. Harris, bass drum; Gorden C. Collins, snare drum. Best wishes to all my friends, P. G. Lowery.

By the autumn of 1898, "Creole Cornetist" Harry Prampin had replaced P. G. Lowery at the head of the band.³² Prampin also brought his wife into the company: "Mrs. Harry Prampin, the one and only colored lady trap drummer in the profession, is now handling a complete set of traps with prof. Dan Desdunes, peerless orchestra. She promises to make it hard for all the calf-head beaters."³³ The depth of Desdunes's orchestra's repertoire is suggested in a February 1899 correspondence: "Our esteemed musical director, Dan Desdunes has received four classical overture viz Aporita, Raymond, Lucretia Borgia and LaBelle Creole (tropic dance)."³⁴ In addition to leading the orchestra, Desdunes "purchased a slide trombone" and started "playing second trombone in Harry Prampin's concert band."³⁵

A comment in the *Freeman* of June 23, 1900, shows that the New Orleans Creole-of-Color musicians, who had strong cultural links, kept in touch while traveling: "E. O. Green and Frank Clermont announce that they have joined the John F. Stowe Uncle Tom's Cabin Company and everything is running smoothly. They say that when they arrived at Parkersburg, Ia., such another French and Creole conversation started between Ralph Nicholas and Frank Clermont, why, they are still talking up to this moment. For a quartette they need Harry Prampin and Dan Desdunes."

In the spring of 1899, Dan Desdunes and Skinner Harris, a fellow member of the Nashville Students, worked up a comedy team act to present on stage. That summer the Nashville Students took a brief respite. Meanwhile, L. E. "Lash" Gideon, who was also a member of the Nashville Students, formed L. E. Gideon's Grand Afro American Mastodon Minstrels, and by September 1899 the Nashville Students were back on the road, in alliance with Gideon's Minstrels; this combination eventually became known as Gideon's Big Minstrel Carnival.³⁶

At the end of 1900 the *Freeman* reported:

Desdunes And Harris. This fine team are two well-known gentlemen, not as a team, but in their respective lines in the profession. Mr. Dan Desdunes holds the distinction of being a good musician, having given satisfaction to every band master that he has had the pleasure of playing under, commencing with Prof. Henderson Smith; second with Prof. P. G. Lowery, then with Prof. Harry Prampin, and last, but not least, with now Prof. S. E. Dodd, the gentleman that lives in the high altitude of register on Eb cornet. We feel safe in saying that either of the two gentlemen mentioned would at any time give Mr. Desdunes a recommendation... Mr. Skinner Harris is fastly becoming one of America's foremost comedians, and if public opinion counts for anything, the time ain't long when his name will become a household word... apart from his comedian work he is a high kicker of no mean ability. These gentlemen joined hands March 20, 1899.³⁷

New Orleans-born "Creole Cornetist" Frank Clermont had joined the Nashville Students-Gideon's Minstrels by early 1901, when he reported: "The company has been as far east as Portland, Maine, and is now on our way west... Our genial manager [is] L. E. Gideon... Our band under Prof. S. E. Dodd is the topic of the street talk in every town after the parade... Skinner Harris our stage manager, of the famous team of Desdunes and Harris, never fails to take 2

and 3 encores as a singing and pantomiming comedian... Our olio [includes] Desdunes and Harris, the incubators of fun."³⁸ That spring brought news that Desdunes had written a new song titled "Gim Me Mine" and Skinner Harris was "singing one of the hits of the season entitled 'I'm Certainly Feeling Right Today,' composed by Desdunes and Harris."³⁹ Desdunes also wrote musical comedy skits: "The Impecunious Coon is the title of a refined, eccentric comedy musical act from the pen of Dan Desdunes to be presented by the Jackson's [sic]."⁴⁰

By late 1902, Frank Clermont had joined another company: "Desdunes & Harris write that they are meeting with great success with Gideon's Big Minstrels. Frank Clermont (Creole cornettist) with Richard & Pringles Georgia Minstrels, No. 2 met his New Orleans friends with Gideon's Minstrels at Des Moines, Iowa, Sunday Dec. 14."⁴¹ Shortly thereafter, Desdunes and Harris were "meeting with great success with The Wireless Phone."⁴² Desdunes spent the summer of 1903 "at his home, 314 Dauphine St., New Orleans, La."⁴³ He and Skinner were back on the road by the spring of 1904, when the *Freeman* noted: "The Georgia Campmeeting is a new musical comedy, launched before the public at Braidwood, Ill., January 26th, 1904. This production was written and staged by Desdunes & Harris... The comedy is furnished by the real comedian (Skinner Harris) while the straight is dished out a Lamode by the clever talker (Dan Desdunes)."⁴⁴

While on tour around 1904, Dan Desdunes reached Omaha, Nebraska, and decided to settle there. He first worked as a janitor, and subsequently became manager of the billiards room at the Omaha Chamber of Commerce and started new musical activities.⁴⁵ On Christmas Eve 1907 he "gave a grand ball" for S. H. Dudley's Smart Set Company: "The elite of Omaha were in attendance, and the music, furnished by Prof. Desdunes Orchestre [sic] was entrancing. The devotees of the dance tripped the light 'fantastic toe' until the wee morning hours."⁴⁶ In 1908 he took charge of the local Colored Knights of Pythias band. According to the *Freeman* of August 25, 1909, a contest between three bands attending a Chicago encampment of the Negro Knights of Pythias was held at Convention Hall, and first place was awarded to the regimental band of the Eighth Illinois National militia. Dan Desdunes's band placed second and O. T. Turner's band of St. Louis, third. A parade by the Pythians followed, and a dance was held later.

DESDUNES AND HARRIS



Doubled in April Ninety-Nine
Each successful in his line.
Sorry have not learned it all
Don't intend, ain't got the gall.
Unique in our every move
Now this assertion we can prove
Engaged to always make them laugh,
Solve the problem you'll know our path
And
Hogan says that we are there,
All men are judged. Ain't that fair?
Russell has not seen us yet,
Rubber goods can stand the wet.
In our hearts we wish all well,
So bye bye boys, time will tell.

Indianapolis *Freeman*, January 27, 1902.

The *Freeman* of July 16, 1910, reported:

Perhaps one of the most helpful colored men in our midst is Mr. Daniel Desdunes [sic], the son of the distinguished writer and historian, Mr. R. L. Desdunes, of New Orleans. When Mr. Desdunes came to Omaha four years ago [sic] there was no musical organization among the colored people. He organized the Desdunes orchestra, and later, making a combination of Omaha talent in his race, he produced "Forty Years of Freedom," which was a distinct success. He appeared as a violin soloist in a joint concert between the Episcopal churches of the city, and won high praise as a violinist. Later he successfully produced his "Lady Minstrels," his "Buster Brown" and his signal triumph, which made a record in juvenile shows for Omaha, "Manager Buster Brown."... His plays, which he composed and presented, have been pronounced by the press and public as artistic successes.

Some of Dan Desdunes's compositions survive on sheet music. His "Happy Feeling Rag," a typical ragtime instrumental piece, was published in 1912 by the Mickey Music Company of Omaha. The cover promotes some of his other compositions, such as "Dandy Dancers Rag," "Honey Bug Rag," "Dixie Notions Rag," "That Teasing Omaha Rag," and "Mexican Thot [sic] Serenade." In 1912, Dan was living at 2120 North Twenty-Fourth Street. By 1920 he and wife Madia were living at 2516 Burdette Street; he was listed in that year's city directory as a music instructor, mulatto, age 47; and Madia a hairdresser, age 33. Dan was advertising his music school in the *Monitor*, Omaha's black weekly newspaper, as early as January 22, 1917.



Cover of Dan Desdunes's "Happy Feeling Rag," 1912 (Janice Cleary Collection, North Omaha *History Harvest*, 2011).

Meanwhile, the Dan Desdunes Band started trading as the First Nebraska Band. In July 1915, when they appeared at a convention of the Colored Knights of Pythias in Clarinda, Iowa, the *Clarinda Journal* reported:

The principal feature of interest to Clarinda people is the band of the First Nebraska Regiment of Uniform Rank, of Omaha, Neb. This band gave a concert in the court house park yesterday afternoon... The band is in charge of Captain W. M. Lewis and First Lieutenant Dan Desdunes, who is also musical director. There are twenty-four musicians present in Clarinda and it is an excellent organization. Its repertoire is varied, the numbers ranging from the best classics to the raggiest rags. Some of the music is composed and much of it arranged by the leader, Dan Desdunes, whose excellent directing has attracted much favorable comment. The band plays together as a unit, are at

the instant control of the leader, are good musicians and the results produced are very enjoyable. The members of the band live in Omaha, where they are employed at various trades. They have their own armory and such a good reputation that they are a regular feature at the Ak-Sar-Ben and take their regular turn in playing the regular Omaha municipal park concerts. They will give a concert tonight at the Chautauqua auditorium.⁴⁷

According to Omaha historian Jesse J. Otto, the first mention of the word "jazz" in the *Monitor* was in a November 3, 1917, advertisement for a charity ball at which the music was to be provided by "Desdunes' Jazz Orchestra."⁴⁸ By this time the United States had entered World War I, and Omaha's first contingent of "conscripted Negroes" was scheduled to depart on Friday, October 26, 1917. A banquet was given in their honor at the Commercial Club with music furnished by Green's Orchestra and the Capitol Quartette, a vocal group. The next morning, the ninety

Grand Charity Ball!

FOR BENEFIT OF

The Old Folks' Home

AT

Beautiful New Dreamland Hall

(Formerly Waslington Hall)

EIGHTEENTH AND HARNEY STREETS

Monday Evening, Nov. 26th

Desdunes' Jazz Orchestra.
Admission 50c

Omaha Monitor, November 3, 1917.



Dan Desdunes's Band, c. 1919. Dan is front and center, in white hat and holding baton (courtesy of the Douglas County Historical Society).

black conscripts boarded two cars of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, and had a musical send-off by the Desdunes-Adams orchestra. At 8 o'clock, the parade to the Union depot began, headed by the First Regimental Band and its leader Dan Desdunes. A general made a speech and a clergyman blessed the soldiers; the crowd sang "The Star Spangled Banner," and the "splendid band played patriotic airs. At 9:00 the train pulled out while the band played 'America' and the crowd cheered and waved good-bye."⁴⁹

Desdunes's Band was to play for more patriotic events. This announcement came at the end of 1918: "What promises to be the best military dance of the season will be given by the members of the Forty-seventh balloon company on Saturday night, January 11 [1919]. The Auditorium has been rented for the occasion and Dan Desdunes will furnish the 'jazz.'"⁵⁰ From then on Dan was amply responsible for the development of jazz in Omaha. Many Omaha musicians later became members of great bands of the swing era, and Desdunes was described as the "father of Negro musicians of Omaha."⁵¹

Founded in Omaha as a Catholic school for orphans, Boys Town was something like the Colored Waif's Home of New Orleans and the Jenkins Orphanage of Charleston, South Carolina. Its originator, Father Edward J. Flanagan, born in 1886 in Ireland, sailed to the United States in 1904, enrolled at Mount St. Mary's College in Maryland, and graduated in 1906.⁵² In 1912 he was assigned to the Diocese of Omaha, and in December 1917 he opened Boy's Town. Located eleven miles west of Omaha on the Lincoln Highway, the Home sheltered more than 200 homeless boys, of every race, color, and religion.⁵³

Father Flanagan had an eye for excellence in all fields, and right after opening Boys Town he asked Dan Desdunes to teach music there. Dan instructed the children with success, and his brass band's fame quickly spread far beyond Nebraska. As the Home needed funds, Dan offered to organize a minstrel show that would be able to raise money. He wrote the plot and the music and directed the dancers, and they had their first performance in January



Paul Whiteman (waving baton) with Father Flanagan's Boys Town Band. Dan Desunes is third from left (holding trumpet), and Father Flanagan is second from right (Al Rose Collection, courtesy Arthur LaBrew, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).

1921.⁵⁴ In April 1922 the 32-piece band went on a summer-long fund-raising tour; soon their success allowed them to visit other States, traveling to New York and to the Pacific coast.⁵⁵ Dan composed a song called "Dividends of Smiles" that was part of a 1927 fundraising drive to pay off the mortgage of the Home, and it became a feature the Father Flanagan Boys' Home Band's broadcasts over Omaha station WOW.⁵⁶ The band continued long after Dan's demise.

In addition to teaching and conducting the Boys Town Band, Dan kept his own band going. They played for parades and society affairs in Omaha, and also traveled quite often. An article in *Billboard* of March 17, 1923, gives information about their activities:

Desdune's Band. A Big Outdoor Attraction of the Middle West. When Billy Sunday, a Methodist evangelist; Father Flanagan, a Catholic priest; the Elks and the Shriners, to say nothing of the State fair officials, give their indorsement to a musical organization, the rest of the country may well sit up and give it notice... The Dan Desdune First Regiment Concert Band, of Omaha, Neb., organized by an ex-minstrel musician with show-shop intelligence, has a record of which any organization might well be proud. For twelve years they have been providing harmony for county, State and district fairs in Nebraska and adjoining States... In Kansas City they played to 20,000 people in the big auditorium. For three successive years they made music for the hundreds of thousands that passed thru the gates of the Nebraska State Fair... In 1922 the United Business Builders of Omaha selected this band to book for Rotary clubs and similar civic organizations, as the one that best expressed the title and spirit of their association. The band has a membership of thirty-eight musicians, with Levi Broomfield, a tenor of international reputation, as vocalist, and with Jeff Smith, a cornetist known wherever civilized music is known.

The *Kansas City Call* of April 13, 1923, added:

Mr. Desdunes is the leader of the famous Desdunes Band which took Kansas City by storm during the Elks convention here a year ago this past August, has charge of the boys orchestra of "Overlook Farm," a boys home near Omaha, and has planned and executed several minstrels for the benefit of the home which have been overwhelmingly successful. The Desdunes Band is one of the best known musical organizations in the middle west, having played five consecutive seasons at the Nebraska State Fair and is the first band to be so honored. The band also accompanies the Omaha Chamber of Commerce on its trade extension trips and is a regular feature at the Ak Sar Ben, Nebraska's around fall festival. Mr. Desdunes is founder and trainer of the organization. Besides the band he also conducts an orchestra which is very much in demand at the exclusive parties given by the wealthy people of Omaha and vicinity. And despite the fact that he is an exceedingly busy man Dan Desdunes has never been known to turn a deaf ear to the aspirations and hopes of any struggling musician. He is musical director of several organizations and schools.

Billboard of March 8, 1924, reported: "Dan Desdunes' Band, of Omaha, Neb., recently presented a program for the benefit of the Old Folks' Home in that city. In February the band played the Minneapolis Auto Show for a week to 180,000 people. One of the most favorably received numbers rendered by the band was Dett's 'Listen to the Lambs.' Dan likes to present the work of our composers." In September they performed at the Nebraska State Fair in Lincoln:

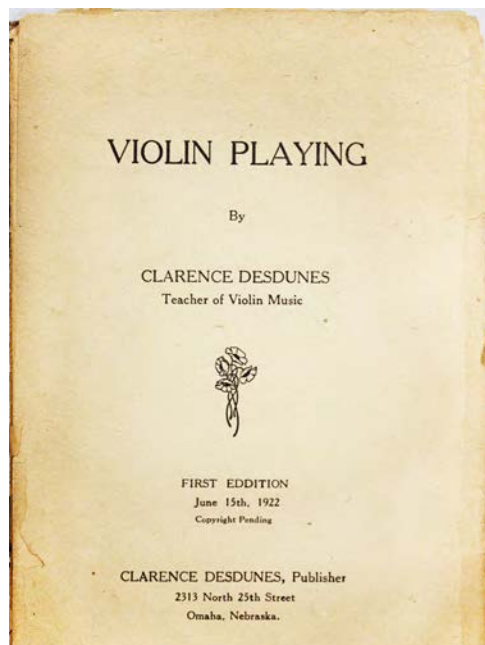
The great Desdunes band of Omaha was a feature, and I like to give flowers while one lives; so I have left our show to speak now of this great band. I have often

read of Desdunes band, but not until now have I heard them play. Prof. Dave [sic] Desdunes, director and a grand old veteran of the musical game, stands out with our best directors...William Lewis is manager of the band and deserves much credit, as the band is booked up to the first or second week in November. In the lineup you will find a gang of old-timers. Most of them have made the old 11:45 many a day. The entertainers are: Irene Cochran, contralto. On Thursday she rendered "Way Down on the Swanee River" and stopped the concert. Levi Broomfield, tenor, came in for his share, while Walter Bell, baritone and chief fun maker, really was a riot. I never felt so good over anything as I did to see this band taking their seats in the band sat and behind Pat Conway's New York band and bring up the rear as it should, without jazz. The roster follows: Prof. Dave Desdunes, director, Jeff Smith, William Countee, Frank Perkins, Carl Daniels and James Francis, cornets; Robert Oliver, Theodore Adams, Leonard Gaines, Joseph Drake, E. Cook, Millard Lacey, Raymond Lattimore and Herbert Waldon, clarinets; Henry McGill, Thomas Roulette, Thomas Perkins and William Keeler, saxaphones; Arty Watkins, Wallace Wright, Hubert Glover and Samuel Greylous, trombones; Harry Morton, baritone; Robert Brown, Harold Hoblins and John Pollard, horns; William Lewis, Ted Morton, A. G. Lancaster and Sherman Phillips, tubas; Holland Harrold, Simon Harrold and Charles Harrold, drums. This is an organization that every member of the Race will feel proud of.⁵⁷

Billboard of December 20, 1924, furnished an update: "The Dan Desdunes Band of Omaha, Neb., which has played more fairs, bazaars and celebrations than any other musical group of the Race in recent years, is taking a fling at the stage. The band has contracted to appear in a 20-minute act at the Rialto Theater, the largest picture theater in Omaha, week of January 10. This presentation may be followed by others. While the stage appearance will be new to the band, its conductor will be quite at home, as he once was a member of the team of Desdunes and Harris in minstrelsy. In those days he also directed the band." In the next week's issue, *Billboard* informed that the band had concluded a three-week tour of Nebraska, playing for indoor bazaars conducted by the Elks.

Following their annual appearance at the Nebraska State Fair in the fall of 1925, a reporter commented, "I wish that some of the folks who think our group can't play anything but jazz could have heard this great band."⁵⁸ The *Chicago Defender* of March 6, 1926, noted: "Dan Desdune [sic], whose band is one of best known in Omaha, Neb., is doing special work for the Union Pacific Railroad. Desdune is the father of success to many musicians now ranking top notchers. He is a good trainer in this line." On December 10, 1927, the *Defender* informed that "Dan Desdune's [sic] Entertainers" were making their annual tour: "In the line-up of the aggregation are Irene Cockran [sic], soprano soloist and organist; Don Morton, comedy roller skater and saxophonist; Daisy Sampson Brown, the boy with the nimble feet; Jeff Smith, trumpet soloist, and Dan Desdunes plays the violin and is master of ceremonies. All of the gang speak French fluently [!]."

While conducting the Boys Town Band on April 20, 1929, Dan caught a cold, and four days later he died of spinal meningitis.⁵⁹ His funeral was attended by hundreds of people of all colors. He was buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska (Plot: Section 12, Lot 658, grave 2). According to a eulogy in *Father Flanagan's Boys' Home Journal*, "there were other Negro instrumentalists in Omaha, but there were none with more music. He went in for melody rather than the usual tin-panning."⁶⁰



Frontispiece, *Violin Playing* (courtesy Amistad Research Center, Tulane University).

Clarence Desdunes

Dan's son Clarence J. Desdunes was born in New Orleans on February 17, 1896.⁶¹ He reportedly finished high school in Omaha, and then, "After graduating from Cusane's school of music, he took three years instruction in the art of teaching from Emily Cleave, graduate of Prague Conservatory of Music, Prague, Czecho-Slovakia."⁶² Settling in Omaha, Clarence "taught violin and orchestra in the Omaha public schools."⁶³ He also contributed a "regular column" to the *Omaha Monitor*, from which Jesse Otto extracted this telling quote: "The black man has the brains as well as the spiritual endowment necessary to understand and appreciate

music in a high degree; he can point with pride to the musicians who emphatically deserve to be called artists, and another quarter century of artistic striving will bring them into the front ranks of artistic achievement."⁶⁵ Clarence added to his achievements in 1922, when he self-published a treatise on violin playing.

By 1927, Clarence had left Omaha to teach and study in New York City. According to report: "Clarence Desdunes, violinist and prominent teacher, is now teaching in the Martin-Smith Music School, Inc., located at 139 W. 136th St. Mr. Desdunes comes to New York well recommended as being a thorough and capable teacher... He is at present studying at the institute of musical art."⁶⁶ The *Baltimore Afro American* of December 10, 1927, described him as a member of the "Big Meeting Trio" in New York: "Clarence Desdunes, violinist, Todman Smith, cellist, and Walter B. Baker."

In 1928 Clarence left New York for New Orleans, where he took a teaching position in the Music Department of New Orleans University.⁶⁷ He also joined forces with Armand J. Piron and Osceola Blanchet to open the Piron-Desdunes-Blanchet Music School, and he became the director of Piron's Number Two Orchestra. In his *Garden of Joy*, Piron booked the best bands, like those of Papa Celestin, Chris

Louisiana Weekly, September 1, 1928 (courtesy Amistad Research Center, Tulane University).

Kelly, and Sidney Desvigne. That fall he introduced Piron's Number Two Orchestra under the direction of Clarence Desdunes, and *Louisiana Weekly* society columnist E. Belfield Spriggins gave the personnel: "O. A. Blanchet, piano; L. Cottrell and A. Derbigny, saxophone; E. Perez, cornet; R. Bromer, trombone; J. Lindsey, drums; D. Barker, and H. Kimball, susaphone [sic]." ⁶⁸ The *Louisiana Weekly* of September 22, 1928, advertised that "Piron's Orchestra No. 2, Prof. Clarence Desdunes, Director Will Entertain

for New Orleans Alumni Assn. [at] Piron's Garden Of Joy, Saturday Evening, Sept. 22. General Admission, 30 Cents." On Monday, November 19, 1928, the band furnished music for a dance sponsored by the Autocrat Club at the Garden of Joy. ⁶⁹

By the fall of 1929, when they played for a "Society Night" function at the Astoria Dance Garden, Desdunes and his band were trading as the Joyland Revelers. They appear to have started touring before the name change. In a 1962 interview Harry Fairconnetue, in company with Harold Dejan and Joe Jackson, remembered joining Desdunes's band when it was still known as Piron's Number Two. Between these three men, the following recollections were gleaned:

The band first started playing at the Pythian Temple Roof Garden (Piron's Garden of Joy), and later went on a six-month tour through Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska, where they remained a while, booking out of Omaha. They returned to New Orleans from Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Desdunes only

played with the band when business was good. Most of Desdunes's jobs were for white people. The colored people were glad to get a chance to hear the band, which was seldom. Earl Fouché was on alto saxophone; Felix Goff, clarinet and tenor saxophone; 'Shine' Williams, drums; Raymond Brown, trombone; Henry Kimball, bass; Lucien Johnson, clarinet and alto saxophone; and Harold Dejan, clarinet, alto saxophone, and sometimes tenor. Harold started playing tenor after Goff left the band. Later, Oliver Alcorn replaced Fouché. Warren Bennett played piano, and

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Louisiana Weekly, August 25, 1928.

SOCIETY NIGHT
AT THE
ASTORIA DANCE GARDEN
235-237 SOUTH RAMPART STREET
Saturday Night, Sept. 21st, 1929
From 8 P. M. to 3 A. M., Featuring
PROF. CLARENCE DESDUNES JOYLAND REVELERS
Namely: Prof. Clarence Desdunes, Violin, Banjo, Saxophone; O. Blanchet, Piano, Singing; Kimble, Bass; Geo. McCullen, Cornet, Singing; Raymond Brown, Trombone, Singing; Ed. Johnson, Alto Saxophone; Harry Fairconatno, Banjo, Singing; Shine, Drums, Singing; Bennie Warren, Tenor Saxophone and Clarinet.
Prof. David Jones and His Accompanists Will Furnish the Dance and Solo Music for the Revue
PROF. COOK, Master of Ceremonies
ADMISSION, - - - - - 30 Cents
NO EXTRA CHARGES
Phone Astoria Restaurant, MAin 9355, for Reservations

Louisiana Weekly, September 21, 1929

sometimes clarinet and saxophone. Bennett grew up in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, and was very good. He played the most like Burnell Santiago. He was very fast, and just as fast on clarinet and saxophone as on piano. Desdunes played violin and banjo. He was very good on violin. George McCullum was the one trumpet player in the band. He composed tunes as he played. When they played in Bay St Louis, the band would play an advertisement on trucks for the engagement to follow that night. A druggist would always pass out cigars to the band. McCullum made up a tune that he called "The Cigar Stomp" in honor of the druggist. The band used stock orchestrations, most of which were written by Frank Skinner. They played all the Ted Lewis arrangements, but they played the old standards by head. Fairconnetue stayed with Desdunes about two years, until the early part of 1930.⁷⁰

The band toured in a Model A Ford bus that Harold Dejan (b. 1909) kept at his house on Dumaine Street between Prieur and Roman.⁷¹ Dejan, who played tenor saxophone in the band, recalled having left Bebe Ridgley's band to join Clarence Desdunes' Joyland Revelers on the recommendation of Earl Fouché, who did not want to go out on tour.⁷² Dejan remembered the following line-up: George McCullum, Gregg "Titty Tat" Williams, and later Alvin Alcorn, trumpet; Raymond Brown, trombone; Warren Bennet, clarinet and piano; Oliver Alcorn, clarinet and soprano saxophone; Lucien Johnson, alto saxophone; Harry Fairconnatue, banjo; Henry Kimball, bass; Nolan Williams, drums.⁷³ Other musicians who played with Clarence Desdunes's orchestra included Kid Keifer and Gregg Williams, trumpet; E. W. Brown, reeds; Ransom Knowling and Baby Woods, bass, and Judge Riley and Lucien Barbarin, drums.⁷⁴

On one summer tour the Joyland Revelers had to replace their piano player, and they picked up Eurreal "Little Brother" Montgomery in Jackson, Mississippi.⁷⁵ Little Brother recalled leaving the Joyland Revelers in Omaha in the last days of 1928, and heading for Chicago, as his girl friend, blues singer Irene Scruggs, had sent for him for a recording session.⁷⁶ In fact, Little



Clarence Desdunes's Joyland Revelers (left to right): Harry Fairconnetue, Harold Dejan, George McCullum, Jr., Shine Williams, Ray Brown (Al Rose Collection, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University)

Brother recorded with Scruggs in September 1930.⁷⁷ Montgomery was replaced by a pianist from Atchison, Kansas; her first name was Vivian, but Harold Dejan could not recall her last name: "She was a fine band pianist but not as good on the blues as Little Brother. When he played the blues people would stop dancing and gather around the piano."⁷⁸

In Meridian, Mississippi, Kildie Holloway was added to the band: "I can never forget him because we told him to get his suitcase to come with the band and he came back with a little paper bag. I said: 'Why don't you go for your suitcase?' and he said: 'This is it!' He got to be a fine trumpet player, he played with all the best bands around like Celestin and Desvigne."⁷⁹

Trumpet player Alvin Alcorn (b. 1912) recalled, "My first job on the road was with Clarence Desdune's [sic] Joyland Revelers. McCullum was out on the road with this band and had come back from a leave of absence he had taken from his job as a cotton inspector. They sent for me on his recommendation and I joined the band in Omaha. They wouldn't let me in the club as I was too young. I told the doorman I was supposed to join the band. They called in the manager who finally said, 'If you're a New Orleans trumpeter, play "Panama."' I stepped back and gave him a little 'Panama' and he let me in. Little Brother Montgomery was on piano in that band."⁸⁰

On Sunday, January 26, 1930, the Joyland Revelers performed at Xavier University for a "Mid-Winter Frolic" hosted by the Xavier Alumni Association.⁸¹ That summer Clarence, who appears to have divorced his first wife back in Omaha, remarried: "New Orleans, La., June 20 – The marriage of Miss Hilda Thornhill and Prof. Clarence Desdunes Friday afternoon just after the public schools closed was a quite a surprise in social circles. Mrs. Desdunes has been connected with the school system for a number of years and was at the Valena C. Jones. Mr. Desdunes is a musician of national reputation, and until a few weeks ago was director of the New Orleans University orchestra. The couple are spending their honeymoon at Houma."⁸²

By September 1930 the Joyland Revelers were in Omaha: "Clarence Desdunes... with his orchestra from New Orleans, and who played here a short time ago, will fill an engagement at Lakeview park."⁸³ The *Chicago Defender* of January 17, 1931, reported: "Clarence Desdunes and his New Orleans Creolians are clicking through the states of Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana. The band just completed a tour of the North. Baby Woods, handling the Sousa, says the bunch may be paged at 2121 Toledano St., New Orleans." A few weeks later saxophone and clarinet player Richard H. Rambert informed the *Defender* that "he was forced to close his engagement with Clarence Desdunes and his New Orleans orchestra on account of illness. He may now be found at his home, 428 Avenue F. South Birmingham, Ala."⁸⁴

Saxophone player Eugene Porter (b. 1910 in Pocahontas, Mississippi) recalled: "I was 20 and I decided I would play professionally, and I went to New Orleans with Clarence Desdunes in April (1931)."⁸⁵ The band was on the road in the spring of 1932, when the *Chicago Defender* filed a report from McComb, Mississippi: "Members of Clarence Desdunes' orchestra of New Orleans were stopover guests at the Hotel Townsend Friday night en route to New Orleans."⁸⁶ By this time, Desdunes's health was failing. According to his death certificate, Clarence Desdunes died of "pulmonary and laryngeal phthisis" on June 4, 1933, in El Paso, Texas, where he had recently taken up residence.⁸⁷ On June 7 his body was returned to New Orleans. The *Chicago Defender* reported on July 1, 1933: "Clarence Desdunes, husband of Hilda Thornhill and father of Clarence Desdunes, Jr., was brought [to New Orleans] from El Paso, Tex. Funeral services were conducted at Holy Ghost Church and burial was in Mt. Olivet Cemetery."

Mamie Desdunes

Two of the most beautifully nostalgic performances by Jelly Roll Morton are the versions of a blues by Mamie Desdunes, known as "Mamie's Blues" or "2:19 Blues." On the 1938 Library of Congress version, the piece is introduced by Morton with these words: "Here's was [sic] among the first blues that I've ever heard, happened to be a woman, that lived next door to my godmother's in the Garden District. Her name was Mamie Desdunes. On her right hand, she had her two middle fingers, between her forefingers, cut off, and she played with the three. So she played a blues like this all day long, when she first would get up in the morning." Jelly Roll plays the piano introduction with his characteristic emphasis on the beauty of the melody, but with a quietly rocking, Spanish (habanera) bass, not present on the later version.

*I stood on the corner, my feet was drippin, wet,
I stood on the corner, my feet was drippin' wet,
I asked every man I met.*

*Can't give me a dollar, give me a lousy dime,
Can't give me a dollar, give me a lousy dime,
Just to feed that hungry man of mine.*

*I've got a husband, and I've got a kid man too,
I've got a husband, I've got a kid man too,
My husband can't do what my kid man can do.*

The 1939 version is much simpler in structure, but equally beautiful and highly regarded since its first release, with its poignant spoken introduction in these words: "This is the first blues I no doubt heard in my life. Mamie Desdunes, this is her favourite blues. She hardly could play anything else more, but she really could play this number. Of course, to get in on it, to try to learn it, I made myself the. . . the can rusher."

*Two nineteen done took my baby away,
Two nineteen took my baby away,
Two seventeen bring her back some day.*

*Stood on the corner with her feets just soakin' wet (her feets was wet),
Stood on the corner with her feet soakin' wet,
Beggin' each and every man that she met.*

*If you can't give me a dollar, give me a lousy dime,
Can't give a dollar, give a lousy dime,
I wanna feed that hungry man of mine.*

Mamie's surname has generally been transcribed as "Desdoumes" but, if you listen closely to the record, it sounds as though it could be either "Desdoume(s)" or "Desdune(s)". Jelly Roll does not pronounce it the French way (day-doon), but in a mixed way; des-doon. Whatever way he pronounced her name, Jelly Roll clearly wrote it as "Mamie Desdune" in a letter to Roy Carew dated December 18, 1939, two days after he recorded Mamie's Blues for General Records.⁸⁸

Alan Lomax interviewed Bunk Johnson in March 1949:

I knew Mamie Desdoumes [sic] real well. Played many a concert with her singing those same blues. She was pretty good looking - quite fair and with a nice head of hair. She was a hustlin' woman. A blues-singing poor gal. Used to play pretty passable piano around them dance halls on Perdido Street.

When Hattie Rogers or Lulu White would put it out that Mamie was going to be singing at their place, the white men would turn out in bunches and them whores would clean up.⁸⁹

According to Manuel Manetta, Mamie Desdunes was a madam; she had a house on Villere Street, and she played the piano.⁹⁰ However, there is no evidence to verify the truth or otherwise of Manetta's statement.

In 2000, Australian jazz researcher Peter Hanley found out more about Mamie Desdunes:

It was not easy because I could not find any listing for her in the index to the 1900 United States Census, and she was not present in the household of any Desdunes listed in the index; at that time, only the head of the household was listed in the index. As a last resort and with a good deal of effort, I located the residence at 2328 Toledano Street in the census sheets to see who was living there in 1900. The sheet revealed that the house was divided into two residences. The head of the household of the first residence was recorded as **George Degay**,⁹¹ whose occupation was described as a hotel handyman; actually written as 'hotel handman' on the census sheet. His wife's name was Mary and there were three other persons living in that part of the house. One of them was **Edna Desdune**, a 13-year-old born in April 1887, described as a sister-in-law of the head of the household." Mamie is a Scottish form of Mary, transported to the New World and many other places. So here, at last, was Mamie Desdunes in the guise of **Mary Degay**.

Peter Hanley could now reconstruct the family tree:

Edna Desdunes, born January 24, 1887, in New Orleans,⁹² is listed in the 1900 U.S. Census at 2328 Toledano Street with her sister Mamie. She married on October 3, 1901, to Robert Winn (age 21) in New Orleans.⁹³ She died on August 1974 in New Orleans.⁹⁴

Members of household:

Name (Sex Race)	Relationship	Born	Occupation
George Degay (M B)	Head	April 1878	hotel handyman
Mary Degay (F B)	Wife of Head	May 1880	[Mamie Desdunes]
Edna Desdune (F B)	sister in law	April 1887	-
John Desdune (M B)	Head	March 1882	Labor Cotton
Louis Cass (M B) ⁹⁵	Roomer	January 1877	Labor Cotton

According to the 1900 U.S. Census, Mamie was born in Louisiana in May 1880 (1879 in fact), and both her father and mother were also born in Louisiana. She had been married to George Degay for two years but had no children. Both she and her husband were able to read and write English, and their house was rented. No occupation was listed for Mamie. Another member of the household was listed as John Desdune, born March 1882.⁹⁶ **John Alexander Desdunes** was in fact born July 31, 1881, in New Orleans, the son of Rodolphe Desdunes and Clementine Walker.⁹⁷

Another son of Rodolphe and Clementine, **Louis Desdunes**, was born June 1889 in New Orleans. He is listed in the 1900 U.S. Census at 2128 Toledano Street with his grandmother Ophelia Walker.⁹⁸ He married Emily Montegut (age 17) in New Orleans on October 19, 1910.⁹⁹ He died in

New Orleans on March 22, 1933.¹⁰⁰ A son, Louis W. Desdunes (1913-2001), died in New Orleans in 2001.

Oscar Desdunes was born on December 21, 1892, in New Orleans, the son of Rodolphe Desdunes and Clementine Walker. In other words, Oscar was the youngest brother of Mamie Desdunes. Their mother was born in 1860 in Louisiana.¹⁰¹ She died on September 23, 1893, in New Orleans.¹⁰²

A part-time musician at the time of the 1910 U.S. Census, Oscar lived with his grandmother, Ophelia Walker, in her house at 2123-2121 Toledano Street. He was still at the same address ten years later, and his aunt, Stella Washington, a widow, was the head of the household. Clarence Desdunes and his son, Clarence Desdunes Jr., were also living there. Everyone thought Oscar was a cousin of Clarence but in fact they were half-brothers, both sons of Rodolphe from different mothers, who lived together at the same residence.

At Clarence's death, Oscar took up the Joyland Revellers, as explained by E. Belfield Spriggins in the *Louisiana Weekly* of May 27, 1933: "Recently Oscar Desdunes was forced to sever his secretarial duties with one of the famous New York Orchestras, and return South because of personal illness. Following a brief stay here he hit the road again taking charge of Desdum's [sic] orchestra, organized by Clarence Desdum, a cousin, whose health had failed. Oscar and his gang were still hitting it off well when last head from some time back." Oscar died in New Orleans in February 1963.¹⁰³

Mary, John, Louis, and Oscar turned out to be the love children of Rodolphe Desdunes and Clementine Walker (the daughter of John and Ophelia Walker). Rodolphe was actually married to Mathilde, they lived in the 6th Ward, and had several children between 1870 and 1877. Then, starting with Mary in 1879, Rodolphe had four children with Clementine.

Mamie Desdunes was in fact born on March 25, 1879, on St. Philip Street between Robertson Street and Claiborne Avenue, as Mary Celina Desdunes, the daughter of Rodolphe Desdunes, a customs house clerk, aged 39 years, and Clementine Walker, aged 19 years.¹⁰⁴ Clementine appeared before Dr. Samuel Choppin, President of the Board of Health and ex-officio Recorder of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, to make the declaration of the birth of her daughter in the presence of two witnesses, Samuel Hepburn and P. Henry Lanauze. The certificate was signed by Clementine in her very neat and distinctive handwriting.¹⁰⁵ Clementine is listed in the 1880 U.S. Census at west side of 8th Street, between St. David and St. Patrick Streets:¹⁰⁶

Members of household

Name (Sex Race)	Relationship	Age	Where born	Occupation
John Walker (M B)	Head	48	Louisiana	Laborer
Ophelia Walker (F B)	wife	40	Louisiana	-
Clementine Walker (F B)	daughter	20	Louisiana	Seamstress
Effie Walker (F B)	daughter	8	Louisiana	-
Ophelia Walker (F B)	daughter	4	Louisiana	-
Stella Walker (F B)	daughter	2	Louisiana	-
Celina Walker (F B)	daughter	1	Louisiana	[Mamie Desdunes]
Effie (Cécile) Walker (F B)	grand mother	70	Kentucky	-
Elenora Jack (F B)	-	80	Louisiana	-



Mamie Desdunes's house, 2328 Toledano Street (Photo by Richard Tolbert, The William Russell Collection at The Historic New Orleans Collection, accession no. 92-48-L.159).

In June 1900, Clementine resided at 2128 Toledano Street,¹⁰⁷ and according to the 1901 *Soards' New Orleans City Directory*, Mamie Desdunes lived at 2328 Toledano Street. This house is very similar in style to the Monette home at 1443 Frenchmen Street, designed for easy conversion into two separate residences, simply by closing up a doorway or two. Jelly Roll's godmother, Laura Hunter, lived at 2706 South Robertson Street in 1900.¹⁰⁸ This house did not adjoin 2328 Toledano Street, but the properties were close to each other. Of course, Laura Hunter or Mamie Desdunes may have lived at various addresses in the Garden District during this period, and there is no reason to doubt Jelly Roll's statement that Mamie "lived next door to my godmother's in the Garden District." There is now evidence that the Desdunes family and the P  ch   and Monette families were well known to each other. In 1880, Mamie

Desdunes's paternal grandparents, J  r  mie and Henriette Desdunes, were living at 149 Urquhart Street, in the Eighth Ward. The P  ch   and Monette families (including Jelly Roll's mother, Louise Monette) were living two doors up the same street at Number 153.

The 1910 U.S. Census indicates that the relationship with George Degay had ended, at least for the time being for one reason or another, as Mamie was listed under her maiden name, but with the added title of "Mrs."

Members of household

Name (Sex Race)	Relationship	Age	Place of Birth	Occupation
Mamie Desdume (F B)	Head	29	Louisiana	none
Louis Desdume (M B)	brother	21	Louisiana	laborer dairy
George Dugue (M B)	boarder		Mississippi	laborer warehouse
Robert Winn (M B)	Head	27	Mississippi	teamster cotton
Edna Winn (F B)	wife	22	Louisiana	none
Elanora Winn (F B)	daughter	8	Louisiana	none

Mamie Desdunes died on December 4, 1911, at 2414 Clara Street, aged 32 years. The certificate was recorded under the name of Mamie Dugue, and the deceased was described as married, a housekeeper. The cause of death was phthisis pulmonitis (tuberculosis of the lungs) according to the certificate of Dr. W. J. Potter. The required declaration before the Recorder of Births, Deaths, and Marriages (Dr. W. T. O'Reilly) was made by undertaker Arnold L. Moss.¹⁰⁹

The authors wish to express their thanks to Bo Lindström and Lynn Sullivan (Omaha Public Library) for their generous assistance with this project. Lynn Abbott supplied citations from the *Indianapolis Freeman*, *Chicago Defender*, *Billboard*, *Baltimore Afro American*, *Kansas City Call*, etc. Hans Pehl and Karl Gert zur Heide also supplied citations from the *Chicago Defender*.

Endnotes

- 1 <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desdunes> (consulted on August 28, 2014).
- 2 R. L. Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire* (Montreal: Arbour & Dupont, 1911). *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire* was translated into English by Sister Dorothea Olga McCants, a member of the Daughters of the Cross religious order at St Vincent's Academy in Shreveport, Louisiana, and published by Louisiana State University Press in 1973.
- 3 Baptismal records, Archdiocese of New Orleans.
- 4 Pierre Aristide was recorded as a carpenter in the 1891 New Orleans City Directory, living on North Claiborne between Lapeyrouse and Laharpe.
- 5 <http://www.frenchcreoles.com>.
- 6 Cheval was probably a descendant of Pierre or Léandre, early settlers of the Trémé district of New Orleans.
- 7 The incomplete databases of the Archdiocese for baptisms and marriages end in 1865. There are no Desdunes/Cheval children in the databases, as Rodolphe's children were born after 1865.
- 8 City of New Orleans, BK 197, 587.
- 9 Keith Weldon Medley, *We as Freeman* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2003), 118. Medley provides a complete narration of the Plessy v. Ferguson case and the Desdunes family's involvement in it.
- 10 June 1880 New Orleans Census.
- 11 Medley, 23, 121.
- 12 Blackpast. <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/desdunes-rodolphe-lucien-1849->.
- 13 Progrès et Liberté, Bulletin Indépendant de la Franc Maçonniere en Louisiane, February 1886 (Amistad Research Center).
- 14 See Dan Vernhettes with Bo Lindström, *Jazz Puzzles* (Saint-Etienne: JazzEdit, 2012), 152-154, 162. Mary Gehman furnished the following list of Desdunes migrants to Mexico: Adrian Desdunes; Antonia Desdunes is on the 1834 list of those seeking residency in Tampico, from "Orleans", 20, married. Appears with Juan Olivella, 44, from Havana, elementary school teacher, also child Ofilia Olivella aged three months. Mexican researcher Jose Castaneda told Mary Gehman that Juan Olivella had a school in Tampico in 1833-35. His daughter died on August 1, 1834. The other daughter, Olivia, died in 1836, and the parents returned to New Orleans. Constance Desdunes shows up in the 1880 New Orleans census as the niece of Jérémie Desdunes. She was 17 years old at the time of the census, while Jérémie was 58. Both Constance and her mother were listed as being born in Mexico. Daniel's brother Elmore married Maria Cabrera, believed to be from Mexico.
- 15 Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, Chapitre X.
- 16 Medley, 103-9.
- 17 Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, Chapitre XII.
- 18 Rebecca J. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 89.
- 19 Medley, 139.
- 20 Medley, 194. One of the members of the Supreme Court was Edward D. White, a former member of the supremacist White League.
- 21 Desdunes, *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire*, Chapitre XII.
- 22 Medley, 217.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Jesse J. Otto, "Dan Desdunes: New Orleans Civil Rights Activist and 'The Father of Negro Musicians in Omaha," *Nebraska History*, vol. 92, no. 3 (Fall 2011).
- 26 H. J. Pinkett, "An Historical Sketch of the Omaha Negro" (unpublished manuscript, April 22, 1937), quoted in Otto, 109.
- 27 Lawrence Gushee, "The Nineteenth Century Origins of Jazz," *Black Music Research Journal*, vol. 14, no. 1 (Spring 1994), noted in Otto, 110. Sylvester Coustaut and George Filhe were founders of the Onward Brass Band, one of the two best African-American brass bands in New Orleans at that time. Sylvester Coustaut lived at 229 St. Philip Street.
- 28 Otto, 109.

29 A Creole-of-color organization, La Société des Jeunes Amis, organized August 1, 1867, and incorporated March 2, 1874, counted about 200 members. It was for men only and offered medical and pharmacy benefits as well as having a society tomb for the burial of members. They operated a hall on Robertson Street. These societies also lent their aid to charitable causes and rented their hall for dances ("soirées dansantes"). The halls were also places where community meetings were held.

30 University of Nebraska Omaha, Criss Library. Special Collections. Repository April 28, 1937: <http://unomaha.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15301coll1/id/321>.

31 "The Stage," *Indianapolis Freeman*, May 15, 1897.

32 "Stage," *Indianapolis Freeman*, October 15, 1898.

33 "The Stage," *Indianapolis Freeman*, January 20, 1900.

34 "Notes from the Nashville Students," *Indianapolis Freeman*, February 18, 1899.

35 "Stage," *Indianapolis Freeman*, October 15, 1898.

36 Lynn Abbott and Doug Seroff, *Out of Sight: The Rise of African American Popular Music, 1889-1895* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), 175.

37 "Desdunes And Harris," *Indianapolis Freeman*, December 29, 1900.

38 Frank Clermont, *Indianapolis Freeman*, February 23, 1901.

39 "Stage," *Indianapolis Freeman*, March 16, 1901; "Notes from Nashville Students and Gideon's Minstrels," *Indianapolis Freeman*, April 13, 1901.

40 "Stage," *Indianapolis Freeman*, November 22, 1902.

41 "Desdunes And Harris," *Indianapolis Freeman*, December 27, 1902.

42 "Stage," *Indianapolis Freeman*, February 21, 1903.

43 "The Stage," *Indianapolis Freeman*, June 13, 1903.

44 "Stage," *Indianapolis Freeman*, March 19, 1904.

45 Pinkett, "An Historical Sketch," 68, noted in Otto, 110.

46 "The Stage," *Indianapolis Freeman*, January 5, 1907.

47 Clarinda (la.) *Journal*, July 29, 1915, quoted in "The First Regimental Band Delights Clarinda," *Omaha Monitor*, August 7, 1915 (omahahistory.org). The Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben (an anagram) was an Omaha-based philanthropic organization.

48 *Omaha Monitor*, cited in Otto, 108.

49 "Commercial Club Dines the Colored Conscripts," *Omaha Monitor*, November 3, 1917; "Reception and Dance At Dreamland Hall," *Omaha Monitor*, November 3, 1917 (omahahistory.org).

50 "47th Company Plans Dance," *Gas Bag*, December 20, 1918 (omahahistory.org).

51 Pinkett, "An Historical Sketch," 70, noted in Otto, 108.

52 Father Flanagan League: Society of Devotion. <http://www.fatherflanagan.org/biography.php>.

53 Janice Cleary. <http://historyharvest.unl.edu/items/show/182>.

54 Otto, 112.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., 113.

57 W. C. Steward, "Cullen's Minstrels With Rubin And Cherry Shows," *Chicago Defender*, September 13, 1924.

58 W. C. Steward, "Steward's Stewings," *Chicago Defender*, September 19, 1925. Steward gave the current roster of the band: "Prof. Dan Desdunes, director ; William Lewis, manager and B-flat bass ; Jeff Smith, solo cornet; William V. Countee, second solo cornet ; Carl Daniels first B-flat cornet; Frankie Perkins, cornet and saxophone; Bob Oliver, solo clarinet; William Adams, solo clarinet and saxophone ; M. Lacey, solo clarinet and saxophone; L. I. Gaines, first B-flat clarinet and saxophone; Earl Carson, first B-flat clarinet and saxophone; Joe Drake, first clarinet and saxophone; E. R. Cook, second B-flat clarinet; H. Robins, first alto; R. Brown, second alto; J. Pollard, third alto; William McGill, saxophone and piano; Tommie Rolette, saxophone and clarinet; A. Watkins, first trombone; W. Wright, first trombone; H. Glover, second trombone; M. Terry, second trombone; Sam Grevisions, solo baritone; H. Morton, baritone; T. Morton, E-flat bass; S. Phillips, E-flat bass; Holland Harrold, Simon Harrold and Sherley Kennedy, percussion." Also mentioned was Irene Cochran, "the greatest Race singer in the West."

59 Otto, 114.

60 *Father Flanagan's Boys' Home Journal*, quoted in Otto, 114.

61 Orleans Parish Birth Records, vol 107, 272.

62 Otto, 115; "Clarence Desdunes Here," *Chicago Defender*, December 3, 1927.

63 "Clarence Desdunes Here."

64 *Omaha Monitor*, September 2, 1920, quoted in Otto, 116.

65 "Clarence Desdunes Here." For a brief account of the Martin-Smith School of Music, "one of the most important black musical institutions in the country," see Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, 1971 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983), 284.

66 *The Catalogue of New Orleans University and Gilbert Academy, 1928-1929* lists: "Clarence Desdunes, Orchestral Instruments – Student Damrosch Conservatory; Graduate Morton Smith School, N. Y., Instructor, N. O. U., 1928."

67 "Progress," *Louisiana Weekly*, September 15, 1923.

68 Ad, "Grand Novelty Dance," *Louisiana Weekly*, November 17, 1928.

69 Harry Fairconnetue, in company with Harold Dejan and Joe Jackson, interviewed by Richard B. Allen, November 11, 1962 (Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).

70 Marcel Joly, "Everything's lovely – Harold Dejan (part 2)," *New Orleans Music*, vol. 8, no. 2 (June 1999), 12.

- 71 Ibid., 10.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Karl Gert zur Heide, *Deep South Piano* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), 67.
- 74 Joly, 10.
- 75 Gert zur Heide, 42.
- 76 Robert M. W. Dixon, John Goodrich, and Howard Rye, *Blues & Gospel Records 1890-1943* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 784.
- 77 Joly, 10.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Clive Wilson and Paige Van Vorst, "The Alvin Alcorn Story," *Jazzbeat*, Spring 2003, 11.
- 80 Ad, "Mid-Winter Frolic," *Louisiana Weekly*, January 25, 1930.
- 81 Emily C. Davis, "Louisiana News," *Chicago Defender*, June 21, 1930. The 1930 U.S. Census indicates that Clarence was divorced from his first wife.
- 82 R. S. Simmons, "Nebraska," *Chicago Defender*, September 6, 1930.
- 83 "Orchestral Doings," *Chicago Defender*, January 31, 1931.
- 84 Karl Gert zur Heide, "Eugene Porter," *Footnote*, vol. 7, no. 5 (June/July 1976), 13.
- 85 "Mississippi News," *Chicago Defender*, March 6, 1932.
- 86 1933 El Paso City Directory.
- 87 Jelly Roll Morton letter to Roy Carew, December 18, 1939, reproduced in William Russell, "Oh, Mister Jelly": *A Jelly Roll Morton Scrapbook* (Copenhagen: JazzMedia ApS, 1999), 223.
- 88 Bunk Johnson interviewed by Alan Lomax, 1949, as quoted in Alan Lomax, *Mister Jelly Roll: The Fortunes of Jelly Roll Morton, New Orleans Creole and "Inventor of Jazz"* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), 21.
- 89 Manuel Manetta interviewed by William Russell with Robert Campbell, Nesuhi Ertegun, and Richard B. Allen, March 28, 1957 (Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).
- 90 The name Degay is probably a variant of Dugas; very common in Louisiana and Georgia, or Dugay; not common in Louisiana. The family's name was said to be Dugas-Rossignol de Desdunes. French researcher Roger Richard advised that this means a man from the Dugas family married a woman from the Rossignol family and they were from a place called "Desdunes," in Haiti. Roger also advised that Desdunes was not recorded in the list of French surnames until the 1960s, and it has no history in French genealogy.
- 91 Social Security Death Index, as Edna Winn.
- 92 Orleans Parish Marriage Records, vol. 23, 360, as Edna Desdunes.
- 93 Social Security Death Index, as Edna Winn.
- 94 The family of Louis Cass lived around the corner on Freret Street and may have been related to the Hécaud family, Jelly Roll Morton's ancestors.
- 95 1900 U.S. Census, Louisiana, Orleans Parish, New Orleans, 7th Precinct, 12th Ward, SD1 ED123 Sheet 4B, Lines 75-79.
- 96 Orleans Parish Birth Records, vol. 77, 800, as John Alexander Desdunes.
- 97 1900 U.S. Census, Louisiana, Orleans Parish, New Orleans, 9th Precinct, 11th Ward, SD1 ED 115 Sheet 1A, line 19.
- 98 Orleans Parish Marriage Records, vol. 32, 661.
- 99 Orleans Parish Death Records, vol. 204, 1840.
- 100 1880 U.S. Census and birth certificate of Mary Celina Desdunes.
- 101 Orleans Parish Death Records, vol. 104, 1051.
- 102 Social Security Death Index.
- 103 Orleans Parish Birth Records, vol. 74, 79; July 31, 1881, vol. 77, 800.
- 104 Orleans Parish Birth Records, vol. 74, 79.
- 105 Louisiana, Orleans Parish, SD 1 ED81 Page 23, lines 35-43. Census date June 1, 1880, enumerated June 11, 1880.
- 106 1900 U.S. Census, Louisiana, Orleans Parish, New Orleans, 7th Precinct, 12th Ward, SD1 ED123 Sheet 4B, lines 75-79.
- 107 1900 U.S. Census, Louisiana, Orleans Parish, New Orleans, 10th Precinct, 11th Ward, SD1 ED116 Sheet 18B, Line 85.
- 108 Orleans Parish Death Records, vol. 153, 833, as Mamie Dugué.

IN THE ARCHIVE



Clockwise from top left: representing one of the great New Orleans families of musicians: Charles, Leonard, and Dameon Gabriel; a power trio: Tommy Sancton, Elijah Wald, and Garnette Cadogan; Brenda Teagarden, daughter-in-law of Jack Teagarden; Ruth Ann Chadwick, viewing "My Sweetheart is a Postman" composed by Philip L. Helm, a family ancestor; Benita Scott, a former student of Manuel Manetta; Delfeayo Marsalis; Al Jackson (right) of the Black Men of Labor and the Historic Treme Collecton, shares artifacts with Cleveland Donald (left) and curator Bruce Raeburn.



Clockwise from top left: author and professor Andy Fry of King's College, London; photographer Girard Mouton shares images with curator Bruce Raeburn; descendants of Peter Bocage: Leslie Smith (great-granddaughter), Cameron Smith (great-grandson), Carole Habdank (granddaughter), Lauren Smith (great-granddaughter), and Christian Smith (great-grandson); Canadian graduate student Caroline Vezina of Carleton University; author and professor Steve Wacksman of Smith College; photographer and author John McCusker; students from North Carolina Central University conducting research.

The Staff of the Hogan Jazz Archive Wants to Know: Who Was Benny Clement?



An early photo of Benny Clement posing with his trumpet in the back yard of the Arabella Street home that he grew up in.

One morning this past summer, Ken Schaefer walked into the Jazz Archive on behalf of his wife, Lorelei Clement Schaefer, with some manila envelopes and file folders under his arm: "Do you know who Benny Clement was?" We did not. "He was a be-bopper," a New Orleans trumpet player (born 1928, died 1994), who happened to have been Lorelei Schaefer's father. While Schaefer commenced to break out Clement's legacy of photographs and memorabilia, we pulled Charlie Suhor's book, *Jazz in New Orleans: The Postwar Years Through 1970*, to see what it had to offer. Schaefer was already familiar with Suhor's book and what it said about Clement; playing catch-up, we raked the index and learned, among other things, that, in spite of the prevailing Jim Crow segregation laws, a "January 1956 modern jazz concert at the black YWCA included Mouse Bonati and Benny Clement along with Ellis Marsalis, Earl Palmer, Red Tyler, and others – all openly announced in a story headlined 'Big Jazz Concert Set Sunday' in the January 21 *Louisiana Weekly*."¹

In his 2001 memoir, *Backbeat*, Earl Palmer remembered gigging at the Sho-Bar on Bourbon Street, "a well-known strip joint with white bands; after hours they brought in black musicians for jam sessions that might go till nine, ten in the morning. That's when the police



Perhaps the most compelling image the Schaefers shared with the Jazz Archive is this snapshot, which survives to demonstrate Benny Clement's early efforts to integrate the bandstands that he played on. Here, apparently on the road, are (l to r): Benny Clement with pianist Ed Frank and bassist Jimmy Johnson.

busted us for intermingling, so we started jamming in Benny Clements's apartment, 912 Toulouse."² Schaefer reminded us of Ramblin Jack Elliott's referential recording "912 Greens," which chronicles a slice of "folk music revival" life at this apparently fabled address. Benny Clement's integrated jazz jam sessions at 912 Toulouse call for a deeper appreciation of what went on there.

One of the photos in Benny Clement's collection captures him as the trumpet player



S. J. Peters High School Jazz Band, 1945 (l to r): Rupert Surcoff, bass; Oliver "Stick" Felix, trombone; Lou Timken, drums; Thomas Balderas, guitar; Benny Clement, trumpet; Tony Mitchell, clarinet (Benny Clement collection via Lorelei Clement Schaefer; thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Oliver "Stick" Felix for identifying personnel).

with the Samuel J. Peters High School Jazz Band. We scanned a copy of it for Charlie Suhor, who placed it in context as the Peters High School band that had won a citywide high school jazz band contest in 1945.³ Suhor identified the trombone player as Oliver "Stick" Felix. Through Tulane adjunct music professor Jim Markway, we were able to send a copy of the photo to "Stick," who provided us with the complete personnel. Most, if not all, of the players in the Peters High School Jazz Band photo continued to play a role in New Orleans jazz. While "Stick" switched from trombone to upright bass and became a mainstay of Pete Fountain's band, Benny Clement made his way into the realm of modern jazz. New Orleans' modern jazz scene is sadly underrepresented at the Hogan Jazz Archive; Ken Schaefer's arrival with Benny Clement's trove of photos and memorabilia has sparked us to take corrective measures. We hope to include a more in-depth look at the musical life and times of Benny Clement in the next issue of *The Jazz Archivist*, and we invite any of you who ever traveled in Benny Clement's sphere to please come forward and share your recollections with us.

-Lynn Abbott and Alaina W. Hebert

Endnotes

1 Charles Suhor, *Jazz in New Orleans: The Postwar Years Through 1970* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2001), 9.

2 Tony Scherman, *Backbeat: Earl Palmer's Story* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 93.

3 Suhor, 23.

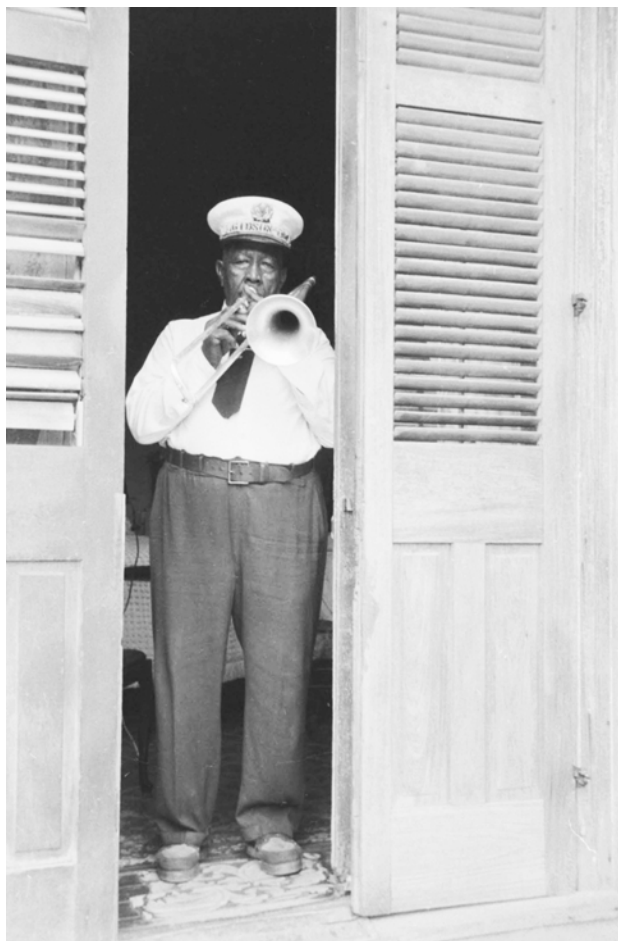
Curator's Commentary

September 2014 has been a very good month for the Hogan Jazz Archive. For the last several years we have been in conversation with our abiding friend, researcher, and patron of the Archive from Sweden Björn Bärnheim about a potential endowment to assist with the Archive's operations and outreach programs. Rather than translate his intentions and motivation for the donation for him, I quote from a brief statement that he supplied for this column: "Since my first trip to New Orleans in July 1967 I've had the good fortune to visit the Hogan Jazz Archive, and over the years it has become the highlight of my visits to the city. It has always been a great thrill to have a look into the fabulous collection that preserves the rich heritage of the music tradition of New Orleans and its performers. My donation can be seen as a little 'repayment' for the warm hospitality and excellent service I have received from the staff at the archive and most of all I hope that the collection will be preserved and improved so that coming generations will have the same opportunity as I have had on my more than thirty visits to New Orleans and the Hogan Jazz Archive." Mr. Bärnheim's generous donation was finalized in September 2014 and will be the first such endowment set up for the Hogan Jazz Archive. The funds generated will be used to endow a research fellowship in his name, to further various preservation and access digitization initiatives, and to help sponsor symposia that will promote knowledge of the history of New Orleans jazz. Thanks are also due to Beth Turner of Tulane University's Office of Development for assisting with the negotiations. Mr. Bärnheim's generosity of spirit and love of jazz are well known to New Orleans jazz musicians, and on behalf of the entire community, we thank him for this donation.

In September 2014 the Hogan Jazz Archive was also contacted by our good friend Barry Martyn regarding the potential disposition of the personal collection of Belgian musicologist Walter Eysselinck, who was active in documenting New Orleans jazz musicians in the 1950s and 60s. His widow, Barbi Eysselinck, drove down from Miltna, Minnesota, to hand deliver this spectacular collection, including 2,412 photographs (339 photographic prints, 454 slides, 1,569 negatives, and 5 film canisters with partial rolls of film), 411 phonodiscs (eighty-nine 33-12" LPs, three acetates, eight 33-12" LP



Charlie Love and Walter Eysselinck (right) in the French Quarter (photographer unknown, Walter Eysselinck Collection, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).



Left: Eddie Morris, 1958 (photo by Walter Eysselinck, Walter Eysselinck Collection, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).



Right: Percy Humphrey, 1958 (photo by Walter Eysselinck, Walter Eysselinck Collection, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).

albums, one 33-12" 5-LP album, thirty-two 33-10" LPs, and two hundred and sixty-six 78-10" records), plus 60 tapes (fifty-five 7" open-reel tapes, one 5" open-reel tape, and four cassette tapes). Mr. Martyn has been working with staff members Lynn Abbott and Alaina Hebert to identify the musicians represented in this collection, and he is finding many unique elements in both the graphics and recorded sound materials.

Of course, we've had some other good months, too. The exhibit "Contemporary Latin Music in New Orleans," featuring the photography of Girard Mouton III, Gustavo Escanelle, and Lucas Barrios coupled with historical images of Hispanics in New Orleans jazz provided by the Archive, ran from June 9 through August 21, 2014, in the Jones Hall Gallery. The exhibit illustrated how musicians with roots in the Caribbean and Latin America have played a vital role in the development of New Orleans music. Everyone who attended, including the renowned photographer Eric Waters, visiting from Atlanta, had a very positive and enthusiastic response. Funding was provided by the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, with media support from Cox Communications. Afterward, Escanelle and Mouton donated 16 prints to the Archive.

In July 2014 we were informed that the Hogan Jazz Archive will be awarded a Community Arts Award by the Arts Council of New Orleans at a ceremony and reception to be held at Mardi Gras World on December 3, 2014. We are greatly pleased to be in very good company, with other recipients including the Zion Harmonizers, the Young Men's Olympian Benevolent Association Juniors, Chief Howard Miller of Creole Wild West, Jeanne Nathan, Arthur Roger, and Studio in the Woods. Given our increased emphasis on using digitization initiatives to make our archival resources readily available on the internet not only to international researchers who are working on jazz history but also to the Greater New Orleans community, this service award means a great deal to us. Through our website (www.jazz.tulane.edu) one can now access the Ralston Crawford Collection of Jazz Photography, the Louisiana Sheet Music Collection, and a growing body of images in our Hogan Jazz Archive Photography Collection through the "collection" tab links at the top of our homepage (choose "digital collections"). The most recent addition, debuting last April as part of the Musical Cultures of the Gulf South Curriculum website funded by the non-profit Music Rising, is an oral history database utilizing MP3 files generated by a preservation and access grant from The Grammy Foundation in 2006 to create a Music Rising sponsored research tool called The William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive Oral History Database, with many of the interviews including transcripts (Go to the oral history quick link at the right on our homepage; then select Music Rising Website). This database is our way of saying thank you to the New Orleans men and women who created the music and to their successors.

With the last issue we made the transition to an electronic journal, available for free on the Hogan Jazz Archive homepage. However, a limited number of print versions will still be available for those who contribute the \$25 annual donation and desire a print copy.

Bruce Boyd Raeburn, Curator



Left: brass band members at a social function: Thomas Jefferson in back doorway; Henry "Sleepy" Robertson exhaling, and Vernon Gilbert in leader cap and holding trumpet (photo by Walter Eysselink, Walter Eysselink Collection, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).

Below: brass band and masonic lodge members in front of an unidentified hall, including Alfred Williams, snare drum; Henry "Sleepy" Robertson, bass drum; and Andrew Morgan, saxophone (photos by Walter Eysselink, Walter Eysselink Collection, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).



Eureka Brass Band in front of San Jacinto Hall, left to right: Albert Warner and Charles "Sunny" Henry, trombones; Robert Lewis, bass drum; Avery "Kid" Howard and Percy Humphrey, trumpets (photo by Walter Eysselinck, Walter Eysselinck Collection, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).



The Young Tuxedo Brass Band parading in the rain: Jessie Charles, tenor sax; Paul Barbarin, snare drum; Wilbert Tillman, tuba; Emile Knox, bass drum (photo by Walter Eysselinck, Walter Eysselinck Collection, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane Univrsity).

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